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Summer • 1956

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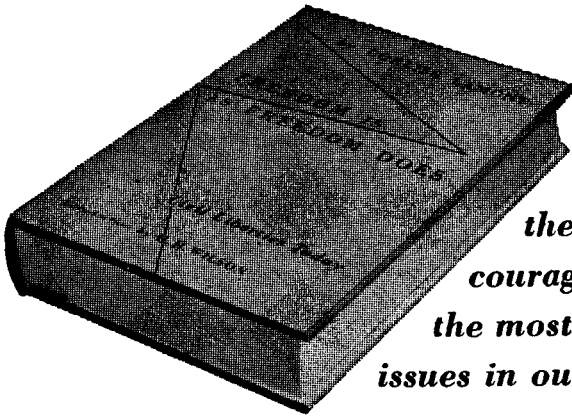

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—EMERSON

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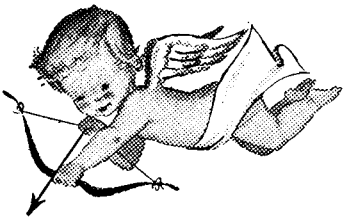

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 25 *Summer, 1956* NUMBER 3

The Cult of Personality

ROBERT STRUNSKY

I

THE FORCE OF PERSONALITY has a long history in human affairs. Plutarch said that writing the lives of famous men served him as a sort of looking glass in which he might see how to adjust and adorn his own life. This has been the traditional view of the function of personality and the role it has played universally. It has developed in consequence of the periodic emergence of unique individuals whose ardent qualities of thought, conduct and temperament have compelled sufficient admiration to serve as a model for others, and, on rare occasions, for large collections of humanity.

Under the circumstances there is a peculiar fascination in the Soviet thesis of a "cult of personality," disclosed by the recent turnabout in Communist doctrine. According to one official interpretation, "the cult of the individual attributed to certain persons supernatural qualities . . . [and] later developed into Stalin's method of leadership. It arose against the background of the enormous achievements of our country . . . [which] were attributed to one man and explained by his special attributes."

✪ From 1928 to 1937 ROBERT STRUNSKY was a reporter and feature writer with the New York *Sun* and an occasional contributor to the *American Mercury* and the *Saturday Review*. Since 1937 he has been in the advertising and broadcasting industries except for an interlude of two years during which he worked in a publishing house and assisted with a special Ford Foundation project on American foreign policy. Mr. Strunsky is associated with the Columbia Broadcasting System and a member of the advisory board of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*.

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The concept of personality as a principle of political philosophy, functioning as an instrument of national policy, provides a vivid symbol of the gulf between the Soviet view of life and our own. At the same time its overtones have a distinct relevance for our society, for it can hardly be denied that the influence of personality is one of the most powerful and insistent forces in American life today.

To what degree may we be said to have developed our own "cult of personality," and in what aspects does it differ from the principles invoked by Stalin as a rationale for his authority?

A note of irony is immediately apparent in the anachronistic tone of the Stalin thesis, now bitterly repudiated by his successors. It raises memories of the ancient principle of divine right—in essence, not too far a remove from the notion of a "supernatural" personality. But apart from such substantive questions it compounds a basic confusion of terms, for despite its title, the Soviet thesis bears little relation to the role of personality in its commonly accepted sense.

However, during the past half century we have seen a marked extension of this role in our own society. It may be generally defined as a growing commitment to the abstract value of personality as opposed to its specific manifestations in the unique individual.

II

The cultivation of personality is intrinsic to the American tradition. As children we are conditioned both by precept and example to be outgoing and gregarious, and to set high store on the importance of personal relations. This conditioning has in turn imposed certain modes of behavior and attitude: a high level of communicability, an eagerness for association, an involvement in the variety of experience, and a belief in the perfectibility of man and his works.

This form of tropism is in marked contrast to the goals of other cultures. It is alien to most European and Asiatic societies, and despite the common bond of language, inherently distasteful to the British. The factors that combine to produce it among Americans

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offer an interesting field for speculation. Essentially they are the product of two major impulses which have energized Western society for nearly two centuries: the expansion of the democratic idea and the advance of technology. Against this background it is not without significance that our own society has provided the most fertile soil for the growth of these processes. There can be little doubt that they have flourished here more abundantly and have earned the commitment of a greater number of people than anywhere else in the world.

Democracy's sublime gift to individual life has been to provide it with mobility of thought and action, thereby enlarging its area of self-expression. In so doing it has encouraged the release of personality hitherto held in check by the consciousness of status and its attendant restraints.

At the same time it contains a fundamental paradox. Concededly the stoutest shield yet forged for the protection of the individual, democracy is not, by the same token, a respecter of his individuality. The variables inherent in personality resist its massive egalitarian embrace. Such aspects of human personality as introspection or the impulse toward privacy tend to be regarded as vestiges of an aristocratic tradition. Democracy wants no part of them. It is not by accident that the principles of "fraternity" and "equality" are closely coupled in the famous revolutionary phrase. Nor is it strange that they should receive their highest esteem and fullest expression in our society.

But democracy has done more than secure the release of the individual personality. It has placed it in the public domain. Our personalities no longer belong to us in the exclusive sense that they once did in previous epochs of our history. We have opened them to public inspection by invitation or on request with the result that the public has, so to speak, established a lien on them under the principle of "squatter's rights."

In great measure this has been the consequence of the tremendous advance in technology since the First World War. The past forty years have witnessed what has been described as a "quantum leap" in the development of the means of mass communication. Like a gigantic microscope the apparatus of technol-

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ogy has enabled each of us to see the moles on the face of democracy. The automobile has revealed the lineaments of the nation's geography, bringing every community, however remote, within reach. Equally, our vast newspaper, magazine, and broadcasting chains have uncovered and magnified the details of our personalities.

III

The mass media have been consistently responsive to the national appetite for personality, creating such institutions as the gossip column and the "personality" article. The arrival of radio accelerated the process, increasing the diffusion of personality both in extent and depth. For the past decade almost no home in the country has been beyond the sound of the human voice however distant; while today television has made it possible to convey the total dimensions of personality into the living rooms of three out of every four families in the country.

The preoccupation with personality animates the entire community, asserting itself most conspicuously in those areas which command our deepest interest and effort, notably, the sphere of business. Nothing epitomizes the national commitment to personality more strikingly than the figure of the American salesman. He stands alone in his critical relationship to the nation's economic welfare. Viewed against the canvas of our society his proportions are heroic. Since his effectiveness is contingent on the degree to which he can make himself congenial to others, the quality of personality has always been among the prime requisites demanded of him.

Today it is no longer as necessary as it once was to be natively endowed with this quality. It may be cultivated through a variety of techniques by which an earnest and conscientious student can attain a high degree of proficiency. Official schools and elaborate curricula exist for this purpose alone and have produced superb practitioners of the salesman's art. American business has historically recruited its leaders from their ranks.

While the discharge of personality continues to be a critical activity in business, it has undergone marked qualitative changes

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in recent years. It has grown in complexity and sophistication as business has become involved externally with government, education, science, and the arts. Today's salesman must be equipped with far more elaborate skills than those once required to get a foot in the door or to confront a customer effectively across a store counter.

The exercise of personality has clearly become a matter of corporate concern, as evidenced by the vast proliferation of public relations counselors and organizations whose primary function is to create favorable climates of opinion in which to meet the demands of special interest groups. Conversely, these groups have themselves discovered the value of employing similar methods to advance their own interests whether they be those of parent-teacher organizations, civic associations or stockholder groups. The belief has flourished for many years that business has a corporate personality as richly differentiated as that of the individual. It has resulted in a substantial investment of energy, skill and money on the part of business organizations to formulate and expose their personalities to the public. What is good for business has been found to be equally useful in other pursuits. The salesman or his equivalent may today be seen playing an important role and occupying positions of influence in the spheres of government, education, science and the arts.

The advance of society, said Whitehead, hinges on the growth of persuasive intercourse. The element of personality is a critical component of such intercourse since the appeal of reason is never fully controlling. It may well be argued that a nation's material and cultural achievements are as much a consequence of the impact of personality on the creative forces at work in society as they are the result of the intrinsic quality of the work itself. In today's complex social organization the merit of the isolated worker's contribution does not inevitably emerge of its own accord. It requires recognition and exposure. It is at this second stage that the organized force of personality usefully takes over.

IV

Historically the impact of personality has been most conspicuous

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in the area of politics. The images of our leaders which most of us carry in our minds are essentially personal in nature—the austerity of Washington, the humanity of Lincoln, the flamboyance of the first Roosevelt, the camaraderie of the second, and, in between, the closed rigidity of the Wilson, Coolidge and Hoover eras which no Indian chief's headdress or oversized collar could mitigate.

During the present century the importance of this image has been increasingly recognized by political leaders not only for its initial value in gaining votes, but in winning the subsequent confidence and support of the electorate for acts of administration and policy. Franklin D. Roosevelt will be remembered as one of the first to respond vividly to the national commitment to personality. He was quick to give a personal tone to his administration, employing such elementary devices as publicly referring to his colleagues by their given names. Above all he was alert to the specific value of the mass media. The institution of the "fireside chat," ostensibly designed as a channel through which the Chief Executive might report directly to the people, was used by Roosevelt to create an atmosphere of intimacy between himself and his listeners, and to project those aspects of his personality calculated to strike a responsive chord.

But of all the available mass media, television offers the most systematic and effective means of personal communication. For more than a decade it has maintained a constant flow of personality into the American home, revealing it in the immense variety of circumstance which life provides. To a degree not always fully suspected, the average family television receiver, now operating nearly five hours a day in thirty-four million homes, mirrors the human condition in a modern industrial society. On its screen the individual in all his diverse forms is seen in passage against the background of his environment: within the framework of family life, the context of his job, or in his role as a member of the community. There can be little doubt that in television human society possesses a tool of unprecedented magnitude with which to see itself objectively: to observe its actions and impulses, and to apprehend its motives.

Through its unique capacity to project the dimensions of personality on a massive scale, television has further enhanced its social

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value. This effect is again most readily observed in the politician who has been forced to call upon professional skill and experience to provide instruction in the proper use of the medium. Nor is this instruction confined to purely technical matters. It ranges across the entire field of theatrical art, which, in essence, is the art of personality.

A study undertaken by Miami University of the role of television in the last Presidential election discloses that the election "highlighted the importance of Eisenhower's personal characteristics . . . the properties of the television medium [were] generally considered ideal for projecting these characteristics." They were listed as "sincerity, appearance, facial expression, friendliness, humility, natural charm, fighting spirit, straightforwardness." Television was also held largely responsible for the sudden increase in Stevenson's popularity during the post-Convention period insofar as it drew from the public a favorable response to the qualities of his personality.

Perhaps the most explicit demonstration in recent years of the power of personality in American political life was provided by three United States Senators. Nixon's tremulous defense of his campaign expenditures, with its sentimental excursions into the details of his domestic life, will remain a memorable highlight of the closing weeks of the 1952 election. Recalling the occasion a year later, Nixon emphasized the care and deliberation which had gone into its preparation in order to achieve the illusion of intimacy essential to gaining a large audience and winning its sympathy. The televised crime investigations conducted by Senator Kefauver and the Army-McCarthy hearings illustrate with equal vividness the far-reaching effects of public disclosure of personality.

Between now and Election Day the manifestation of political personality will come into full tide, reaching its peak of saturation during the weeks immediately preceding the day of judgment. It will be apparent in the profusion of hand-shaking and baby-kissing, and in the flood of photographs revealing the various candidates in circumstances and postures calculated to identify them with the prevailing manners and customs of the major voting blocs.

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V

Organization diminishes the element of exuberance in society. It implies the formulation of purpose and the prefiguring of consequence. In seeking to eliminate caprice it alters the tone of life. In a rigorously ordered system intensely oriented toward technology, the occasions for the release of individual personality inevitably decline.

Our own society is deeply informed by a sense of organization. It is manifest in the structure of our lives, the conduct of our affairs, the character of our relationships, the architecture of our homes, and the planning of our communities. It has spread beyond the confines of commerce into the working areas of the mind and spirit. In the course of its sprawling progress it has made perceptible inroads on the individual personality. An extensive literature continues to ascribe the growing alienation of the individual and his loss of personal identity to this encroaching process.

The current status of personality in the public mind and the intense preoccupation with its attendant rituals strongly suggest a basic alteration of its character: it appears to have lost something of its intrinsic quality of differentiation, to have taken on a collective aspect, and to have assumed the proportions of a popular cult. For whatever comfort it offers, its evolution may be viewed as a process of natural selection, an organic response to the challenge of its environment. For despite the social and technological forces exerted against it, the expression of personality remains the primary assertion of human existence, destined to resist containment and indefatigable in seeking its outlet.

Man does not easily surrender his autonomous nature or concede his irrelevance. When denied by circumstance, he creates his own occasions of individuality, contriving them out of the very forms which conspire to repress them. If, under the aspect of eternity, these occasions appear to be deprived of their spontaneous beauty, the fact is not apparent to him. All he asks is that the occasions exist and that he remain free to create them.

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Sholom Aleichem: The Old Country

ALFRED KAZIN

THE WAY TO READ SHOLOM ALEICHEM is to remember from the outset that he is writing about a people, a folk, the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe. There are a great many Jews and non-Jews who resent the idea that the Jews are a people, for they think this requires all Jews to speak the same language and to live in the same territory. But Sholom Aleichem's characters already are a people. They are a people not merely because they speak the same language, Yiddish, or because they live in the Pale of settlement that the Czarist government kept Jews in. They are a people because they think of themselves as a people. And what is most important, they are a people because they enjoy thinking of themselves as a people.

This is the great thing about the Jews described by Sholom Aleichem. They enjoy being Jews, they enjoy the idea of belonging to the people who are called Jews—and "their" Sholom Aleichem, perhaps more than any other Jewish writer who has ever lived, writes about Jewishness as if it were a gift, a marvel, an unending theme of wonder and delight. He is one of those writers whose subject is an actual national character, a specific type—the Jew as embodied in the poor Jew of Eastern Europe. In a way he does remind us of Mark Twain, who was so entranced with a new character, the Western American, that he was always trying to weigh him, to describe him, as if he, Mark Twain, had discovered a new chemical element. When Mark Twain writes of "the calm confidence of a Christian with four aces," we know that the pleasure he

✪ ALFRED KAZIN, professor of American studies at Amherst College, is the author of *The Inmost Leaf, On Native Grounds,* and *A Walker in the City.* Besides teaching at colleges here and abroad, Mr. Kazin has been a literary editor for the *New Republic* and a staff writer for *Fortune.* This article will introduce the forthcoming Modern Library volume of Sholom Aleichem stories.

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gets in writing that is, in part, the satisfaction of knowing that no one but an American could have written that sentence. It is an artistic pleasure, not a chauvinistic affirmation or a defensive maneuver: it is the pleasure of presenting certain local traits, feelings, habits, jokes, even certain biological characteristics, as a physical *substance*, a living addition to the world of nature—something that you can smell and taste and enjoy. You find this kind of artistic substance in Shakespeare's presentation of a lower-class character like Pistol; in Dickens' Cockneys, who walk off the streets of London, delighting us with their pleasure in being Londoners, in their physical relish of their identity as people of that place and time (and who are proud that they spring straight from the imagination of Charles Dickens). Americans, in their attempt to endow a new country with a specific national type, have contributed very largely to this art of national character. But, generally, this kind of pleasure in one's own national being is, I should say, more European than it is American. I have often noticed the difference in the greater pride with which Europeans tend to project their own language, as opposed to our more functional and careless use of English. I have seen it particularly in the Neapolitan dialect theater of Eduardo de Filippo, and in Italian movies, where a type will appear that instantly captivates the audience because he is recognizable, a symbol of the country's human wealth, a tangible re-creation of the life of ordinary experience.

It is this kind of European, seasoned, familiar pleasure in the national circle of one's own people that lies behind Sholom Aleichem's stories. But what kind of enjoyment can these people derive from being Jews, since they are incessantly harassed by the Russian government and surrounded by peasants who are usually anti-Semitic and can easily be goaded, with the help of the usual encouragement from the government itself and a lot of vodka, into making pogroms? What is it, in short, that makes for *enjoyment* in these local terms? The answer is that one enjoys being a member of a people because one shares in the feast of their common experience. You share in something that is *given* to you instead of having to make every institution and every habit for yourself, out of noth-

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ing, in loneliness and with exertion. The secret of this enjoyment consists not so much in physical solidarity and "togetherness," in the absence of loneliness, as in the fact that a deep part of your life is lived below the usual level of strain, of the struggle for values, of the pressing and harrowing need—so often felt in America—to define your values all over again in each situation, where you may even have to insist on values themselves in the teeth of a brutish materialism. We enjoy things only when we can commit some part of our daily life to tradition, when we can act ceremonially, ritualistically, artistically, instead of having to decide in each case which act to perform and how to go about it and what we are likely to get out of it. What we enjoy is, in fact, nothing less than the unconscious wealth of humanity, which is its memory.

This is the fabled strength of "the old country," which deprived the Jews of Eastern Europe of every decency that we take for granted, but allowed them to feast unendingly on their own tradition—and even to enjoy, as an unconscious work of art, their projection of their fiercely cherished identity. The very pen name *Sholom Aleichem* is an instance of this. (His real name was Solomon Rabinowitz; he was born near Kiev in 1859 and died in the Bronx in 1916.) *Sholom Aleichem* is the Hebrew greeting, "Peace Be Unto You," that is technically exchanged between Jews. It is said with more lightness and playfulness than you would guess from the literal translation. Its chief characteristic, as a greeting, is the evidence it gives of relatedness. Now Solomon Rabinowitz, who actually belonged to the prosperous and more "emancipated" middle class of Russian Jewry (he even married into its landed gentry), took this pen name precisely because he found in the phrase an image of the sweet familiarity, the informality, the utter lack of side, that is associated with the Yiddish-speaking masses of Eastern Europe. A Yiddish writer who calls himself *Mister* Sholom Aleichem tells us by this that he has chosen cannily to picture himself as one of the people and, modestly, to be a register or listening post for his people. Sholom Aleichem! The name's as light as a feather, as "common" as daylight, as porous to life as good Yiddish talk: it is the very antithesis of the literary, the mannered, the

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ornate. If you didn't know anything else about Mister Sholom Aleichem (several of his characters address him so when they bring their stories to him) you should be able to guess from the name the role that he has chosen to play in his own work. He is the passer-by, the informal correspondent, the post office into which Jews drop their communications to the world. All he does, you understand, is to write down stories people bring him. He invents nothing. And need one say—with that name, with that indescribably dear, puckish, wrinkled face of his—that you will never learn from him *what* he has invented, that he has all Yiddish stories in his head, that any one story people bring him will always be capped with another?

In the world of Sholom Aleichem, nothing has to be made up, for the life of the Jews, to say nothing of the Jewish character, is an unending drama. Nor can it be said of anything that it's never been seen or heard of before. The Jews have lived with each other for a very long time, and they know each other through and through—and this, often enough, is what they enjoy. Their history, alas, has too often been the same, and everything that you see in Kasrilevka (the little Jewish town which is all little Jewish towns) or Yehupetz (Kiev, the big city), can be matched from something in Mazeppa's time, which is late seventeenth century, or that of Haman, who tried to kill all the Jews in Persia in the fifth century B.C. Nor, indeed, is anything ever said just *once*. Everything is real, everything is typical, and everything is repeated.

You must understand, first, that Sholom Aleichem's characters possess almost nothing except the word—the holy word, which is Hebrew, and the word of everyday life, which is Yiddish. They are "little" people, not in the sense that they are poor little victims, but in the sense that they are unarmed, defenseless, exiled, not in the world, not in *their* kind of world. All they have is the word. They talk as poor people always talk—because poor people live near each other, and so have a lot of opportunity to talk. They talk the way the European poor always talk—Cockneys or Neapolitans or Provençals: they talk from the belly; they roar, they bellow, they grunt, they scream. They imitate the actual sounds that life

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makes, and they are rough and blunt. But most of all, they are poor Jews talking, i.e., they find an irony in language itself. Their words strive after the reality, but can never adequately express the human situation.

This sense that the letter strives after the spirit, but can never fully capture it—this seems to me the essence of the historic Jewish consciousness, with its devout and awestruck yet faithful obedience to some overmastering reality. We are all familiar enough with the Hebrew psalmist's despair that he can find the word, the deep, deep word still lacking to human speech, that will convey the bounty of God. But Yiddish, which is particularly the language of the exile, of the long Jewish wandering, is identified by these poor Jews with the contrast between the Jewish situation in the world and the large and inextinguishable hope of another world which they profess. They do not "despise" Yiddish because it is the tongue of everyday life, and one which they themselves call a vernacular: they love it; it is theirs. But by identifying it with their reduced situation, with their exile, with their isolation, they embody in it an historical moment, the present and its desolation, rather than the world of eternity which is mirrored in Hebrew. Yiddish is the poor Jew's everyday clothes rather than his Sabbath garment, Hebrew. But in the Jewish consciousness it is precisely the life of everyday that is contrasted with the divine gift of the Sabbath, and it is this awareness of what life is actually like (seen always against the everlasting history of this people and the eternal promise) that makes the very use of Yiddish an endless commentary on the world as found.

And it is a commentary on the spirit of language itself. One of the things you get from Sholom Aleichem is this mockery of language, a mockery which—need I say it?—carries a boundless pleasure in language and a sense of the positive strength that goes with mighty talk. The mockery may indicate the inadequacy of words when describing the vastness and strangeness of Russia in which Yiddish-speaking Jews felt lost: "They all began to tell each other stories about spirits and ghosts, incidents that had occurred right here in Zolodievka, in Kozodoievka, in Yampoli, in Pischi-Yaboda, in Haplapovitch, in Petchi-Hvost, and other places." It conveys,

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over and over, a mild, loving, but positive irony toward the Creator. "How cleverly the Eternal One has created this little world of His, so that every living thing, from man to a simple cow, must earn its food. Nothing is free." The mockery may indicate despair at reproducing a really odd face: "In appearance Shimmen-Eli was short and homely, with pins and needles sticking out all over him and bits of cotton batting clinging to his curly black hair. He had a short beard like a goat's, a flattened nose, a split lower lip, and large black eyes that were always smiling. His walk was a little dance all his own and he was always humming to himself. His favorite saying was, 'That's life—but don't worry.'" Sholom Aleichem leaves the rest to the imagination. Only the imagination can do justice to the rest.

Or the mockery may, as in a familiarly shrewish tirade by a wife or mother-in-law, mean not only the opposite of what it seems to mean (i.e., it may actually hide affection, though no one but the husband-victim should be expected to know this); but, even more, it will be a commentary—to put it gently!—on the world which a woman cannot always act in, but which, with tongue and blazing eyes, she implacably judges. The husband is always in a direct line of fire, since he is a ne'er-do-well, a *schlemiel*, a genius at bad luck, a *schlimazl*. But it is not the husband's failures alone that are scorned; it is the folly of the world itself—for daring to think of it as *the* world (i.e., a place where human beings can live). Thus Menachem-Mendel ("In Haste") who tries his hand at everything in the big city and succeeds at nothing, and who, precisely because his ambition is exceeded by his innocence, illustrates the cruelty of the great world in which he naïvely tries to get a living. The particular joke just now is that he has become a professional matchmaker. Home for Passover, first off he sees in the yard his mother-in-law engaged in furious housecleaning for Passover:

> When she saw me, she managed to control her joy. She kept right on with her work, muttering to herself:
>
> "Well, well! You mention the Messiah—and look who comes! Here he is, my bird of Paradise. . . . If he doesn't spoil, he'll find his way home. Goats run away, chickens get lost, but men always come back. . . .

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The only place they don't return from is the Other World. Now I know why the cat was washing herself yesterday, and the dog was eating entrails. . . . Oh, Sheine-Sheindel, daughter, come here! Welcome your ornament, your jewel, your crown of gold and diamonds! Your holy of holies. . . . Quick, take the garbage away!"

At this point my wife runs out, frightened, and sees me. Her welcome is more direct.

"Tfui!" she spat out. "You picked just the right time to come. All year long you roam around that dirty city, lying around in all the attics, engage in every idolatry—and here you come fluttering in on Passover Eve, when we're busy cleaning up and there is not time to say a word to each other. . . ."

An irate man says of a stranger he doesn't like: ". . . comes all the way from Zolodievka and fastens himself to us like a grease spot." Sholom Aleichem says of Kasrilevka itself (*the* very embodiment of all little Jewish towns, the poor man's town): "From a distance it looks—how shall I say it? like a loaf of bread thickly studded with poppy seed." He remarks, in passing, that "the real pride of Kasrilevka is her cemeteries." The wonderful, the lovable Tevye, Tevye the dairyman, the poorest and most faithful and most touching of all Sholom Aleichem's poor Jews, remarks in passing: ". . . with God's help I starved to death." And when he comes through the woods from Boiberik to Kasrilevka, late, so very late that he has to say his evening prayers on the spot, the horse runs off and Tevye runs after his wagon—saying his prayers as he runs. Characteristically, he regrets that he cannot, now, *enjoy* saying his prayers. "A fine way to say *Shmin-esra!* And just my luck, at a moment when I was in the mood to pray with feeling, out of the depth of my heart, hoping it would lift my spirits."

In this world, the extreme is a matter of course—and yet, from a Jewish point of view, an understatement. For these people have much to think about, much to live with; much, much, to live through. In the lovely lyric story, "A Page from the Song Of Songs," which portrays the closeness to nature, to ordinary sensuous enjoyments that these Jews so rarely experienced, the boy cries out, in the rapture of Passover, of spring: "What delights the Lord has provided for his Jewish children." But Tevye the dairyman, who loves

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God with all his might, can still remember, as he runs after his horse—"chanting at the top of my voice, as if I were a cantor in a synagogue"—he can still remember to add private comments on his prayer. "*Thou sustainest the living with loving kindness* (and sometimes with a little food) *and keepest thy faith with them that sleep in the dust.* (The dead are not the only ones who lie in the dust; Oh, how low we the living are laid, what hells we go through, and I don't mean the rich people of Yehupetz who spend their summers at the *datchas* of Boiberik, eating and drinking and living off the fat of the land. . . . Oh, Heavenly Father, why does this happen to me?). . . ." And coming to the part of the evening prayer which asks, "*Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed,*" he cannot help adding under his breath: "Send us the cure, we have the ailment already."

For Tevye and his people the word is not the beginning of things, the foundation of the world; it is a response to the overmastering reality—to the world and the everlasting creation, the eternal struggle and the inestimable privilege of being a Jew.

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POEMS

ERIKA RENON

Of Joy

(To Jo)

If joy could make me tremble
I'd be a poplar tree,
with silver-coated, twinkling leaves,
to sway my joy to thee.

If joy could make me echo
I'd be a bell of glee,
with rising, chiming rhythms,
to ring my joy to thee.

If joy could coin my being
I'd be what I can't be,
and only then could I convey
the joy you gave to me.

There Goes My Child

(For Ingrid)

There goes my child.
Her gait is grace.
The radiance showing on her face
is my delight.

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I can't embrace
her swinging pace.
I can't forestall
her errors all.

Nor can I hold
what I behold,
nor can I tell
what should be told.

Nor will I catch
what might be caught,
or teach the lesson
I was taught.

I can but stand
and gaze in awe
at all the radiance
which I saw;

the radiance
glowing on her face.
There goes my child.
Her gait is grace.

✪ ERIKA RENON is the wife of the distinguished Hungarian author René Fueloep-Miller. An established German poet, she is now writing in English. The first of her poems to be published in the United States appeared in the Spring, 1956 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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Liberalism in the Fifties

GRANVILLE HICKS

WRITING IN THE PARTISAN REVIEW a couple of years ago, Irving Howe contrasted "the buoyant free-spirited cultural life of 1923 with the dreariness of 1953." Mr. Howe was scarcely out of diapers in 1923, but of course the record is clear. Things were happening in the early twenties: new writers emerging—Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, Hemingway; older writers winning new reputations—Anderson, Dreiser, Lewis. This was the decade of Harold Stearns's symposium, *Civilization in the United States*, and of H. L. Mencken's *American Mercury*. It was the decade of Oswald Garrison Villard's *Nation*, Herbert Croly's *New Republic*, and Heywood Broun's column in the New York *World*. It was the decade of the expatriates and their little magazines.

What held the twenties together, from the flappers' short skirts to the manifestoes in *Secession* and *Broom*, from the bathtub gin to LaFollette's campaign for the Presidency, from all the articles and books about the new morality to all the articles and books about dollar diplomacy or Germany's innocence in 1914, was the spirit of rebellion. The motto of the decade was "Whatever is, is wrong." It was a motto that served, as Howe suggests, to free the spirit, to free it, perhaps, from some allegiances and responsibilities to which it might better have been bound, but in any case to free it. And the very magnitude of the revolt, to say nothing of its triumphs, real or apparent, made for buoyancy. Howe is quite right in supposing that it was a good time for a writer—or for any intellectual—to be alive and young.

The cultural life of the fifties is very different, and *dreary* is a possible word for it. A sign of the times is the fact that a fairly large number of intellectuals, some of them on the youngish side, call

✪ Although primarily concerned with the world of letters as author, teacher, reviewer and publisher's adviser, GRANVILLE HICKS has long maintained an active interest in political developments.

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themselves "conservatives," whereas in the twenties, at least until the brief upsurge of Humanism at the end of the decade, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More seemed to be upholding a lost cause. More significant is the subdued tone in which most of the self-styled liberals speak of the status quo. Nor should we overlook the quiet dedication with which many intellectuals cultivate their own gardens.

There are several explanations of the change. Some people put the blame on McCarthyism, and it is true that dissent has sometimes been severely penalized in recent years. On the other hand, there have been outspoken dissenters who have got away with their outspokenness, and it seems probable that inner pressures are more important than outer. Some observers, for instance, point out that a certain section of liberalism became involved with communism in the Popular Front period of the late thirties and was thereby discredited. Here again there is some truth, but we must remember the many liberals who fought against communism in the thirties, to say nothing of the generation that has grown up since the collapse of the Popular Front.

The main reasons are the obvious ones. In the first place, the Cold War has taught the majority of intellectuals to measure American civilization not by an absolute standard but in comparison with Soviet communism, and, between the two, they have no doubt which they prefer. In the second place, they can see as clearly as anyone else that certain major evils have been eliminated or reduced in the past twenty years. We not only produce more goods than ever before; we distribute them more equitably, so that we have probably come closer than any other society in history to the abolition of poverty. Workingmen, far from being the defenseless victims of exploitation, are protected both by the nation's laws and by their own powerful organizations. The underprivileged groups —women, aliens, Negroes—draw nearer and nearer to equal rights. In short, many of the goals that the radicals and reformers of the twenties set themselves have been or are being achieved.

There are groups of intellectuals, however, with whom these considerations carry little weight, and a study of their views may help us to define—by a process of exclusion, so to speak—the role

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of liberalism in the fifties. First, there are a few Communists, fellow travelers, and so-called independent Marxists who insist that the United States is still a capitalist country and therefore subject to all the ills of capitalism. They point to what they call American imperialism and war-mongering, to the suppression of civil liberties, to the continuing discrimination against minorities, to the concentration of power in the hands of a few big businesses, and to the low standard of living that prevails in backward areas of our economic life. But their principal argument is "Wait and see." Prosperity, they insist, cannot last; a depression is inevitable, and that will prove their point.

The Communists believe not only that all is wrong in the United States, but also that in the Soviet Union all is right. The independent Marxists—for instance, Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman and most of the contributors to their *Monthly Review*—do a little better than that, for they will grant that Russia isn't perfect. But they hold that it is a socialist country and therefore on the right track, whereas the United States is a capitalist country and *ipso facto* headed for disaster. The people on the fringe, such people as one often finds contributing to the *Nation*, are sometimes committed to dogma and sometimes not; in either case they use two sets of glasses, one for looking at the U.S.A., the other for looking at the U.S.S.R.

The second important group is made up of the Socialist intransigents, who have an easier position to defend inasmuch as they condemn the Soviet Union as well as—and sometimes much more than—the United States. To them the existing system in Russia is the antithesis of socialism and is anything but good. On the other hand, they agree with the *Monthly Review* people that our prosperity cannot endure, though they are likely to speak of the weaknesses of a war economy instead of citing Marx. Principally, however, they differ from the independent Marxists in emphasizing our cultural shortcomings rather than the defects of our economic system.

Irving Howe, from whom I have already quoted, is the most vocal of the Socialist intellectuals. The author of valuable studies of Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner, he has also collaborated in a book about Walter Reuther and the United Auto

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Workers and is currently writing a history of the Communist party of the United States. Like many critics in the past, and unlike most of his contemporaries, Howe is equally interested in literary and social problems. In fact, the large scope of his interests—and his dissatisfactions—is reminiscent of the twenties.

Howe is not only dissatisfied with the condition of our economy, with the distribution of political power, and with the state of American culture; he is particularly dissatisfied with the lack of dissatisfaction. In his piece for the *Partisan Review*, called "This Age of Conformity," he wrote: "We have all, even the handful who try to retain a glower of criticism, become responsible and moderate. And tame." The tameness of the intellectuals is the burden of his article. They are being domesticated, he complains; they are being taken over by the institutional world—government, the colleges, the big magazines—a world that needs them "*because* they are intellectuals . . . but does not want them *as* intellectuals." "Surely," he goes on, "this relationship must be one reason for the high incidence of neurosis that is supposed to prevail among intellectuals. A total estrangement from the sources of power, even a blind unreasoning rejection of every aspect of our culture, would be far healthier if only because it would permit a free discharge of aggression."

His attack is all embracing: the timidities of the self-professed liberals, the reactionary views of some ex-Communists, the new criticism and that related phenomenon, the new orthodoxy, with its enthusiasm for the dogma of original sin, the preoccupation with form, the preoccupation with symbols and myths. All are to him symptoms of the disease of conformity, which, he feels, is ravaging our culture. The only cure he can see lies in the spirit of rebellion, and one comes to believe that it is principally for the sake of rebellion that he has taken his stand with the Socialists. Neither here nor elsewhere do his arguments for socialism carry much conviction, but he can communicate with great effect the disgust that overcomes him when he contemplates the contemporary American scene.

At about the time he published his article in *Partisan Review*, Howe was helping to found a new magazine, *Dissent*, subtitled "A

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Quarterly of Socialist Opinion," which in the two years of its existence has stubbornly maintained "a glower of criticism." Its purpose is "to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States; to dissent from the support of the 'status quo' now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable." Some of its editors and contributors are earnest and more or less orthodox Socialists, and it publishes a certain amount of Socialist theory, but mostly it is concerned with attacking the government, the neo-conservatives, and especially those liberals who have a good word to say for the way we live now in America. Much indignation is spent on such organizations as Americans for Democratic Action and the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, such magazines as *Commentary* and the *New Leader*, such individuals as Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling and David Riesman.

It is in some ways a useful magazine, but too self-consciously devoted to what Matthew Arnold called "the Dissidence of Dissent." To say a good word for America is, in the minds of the editors, a shocking betrayal. Here is Mr. Howe again: "In the literature of liberal mythology America ceases to be a nation among nations, the major segment of international capitalist economy, and becomes instead an embodiment of the heart's desire which the brutish European intellectuals, in their malice or stupidity, insist upon maligning." Here is C. Wright Mills, crying out against "the curious American celebration, into which so much scholarly and intellectual energy now goes." Examples, he points out in a footnote, are "embarrassingly available," but, "unfortunately no one of them is really worth examining in detail."

Nothing would be easier than to brush aside *Dissent* as an expression of neurosis or nostalgia, as a bid for attention, or as an interesting exercise in the venerable American tradition of the cracked pot. But among its editors and contributors are persons one does not want to brush aside—for instance, Erich Fromm, who has written two revealing books about the problems of contemporary society, *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself*. More recently he has examined the economic foundation of our culture in *The*

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Sane Society, and the views he expresses explain the appearance of his name on the masthead of *Dissent.* He will admit that in our super-capitalism men are not so cruelly exploited as they were a century ago, but he insists that most people are slaves. Not only are they treated as commodities; they think of themselves as commodities. Their material wants may be better supplied than ever before, but more fundamental human needs—needs of the mind and the spirit—are neglected. If this neglect continues, he warns, we are headed either for mass destruction or for the kind of universal slavery described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World.*

Dr. Fromm has a remedy—what he calls "Humanistic Communitarian Socialism" as embodied in the Communities of Work that have sprung up in France since the war. Since he does not propose to abolish large-scale industry and mass production, it is hard to take his proposal seriously. But it is precisely the impracticality of his remedy that indicates the emotional intensity with which he has rejected his and our culture.

If you read much contemporary fiction, you know that the mood of rejection is widespread. Take, for instance, William Gaddis' massive and confused novel, *The Recognitions,* which finds fraud and forgery the foundations of our society. Or there is Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth,* which sees our self-destructive impulses at work both in the atom bomb and in so commonplace an institution as a department store. A few years ago Allan Seager wrote in *Amos Berry* about a businessman who not only repudiated our business civilization lock, stock, and barrel, but was so disgusted with his former boss, as an embodiment of it, that he shot him. Richard Wright's *The Outsider,* Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man,* all three of Norman Mailer's books, and a great many other novels express a profound sense of alienation.

In *The Lonely Crowd* and some of the essays in *Individualism Reconsidered,* David Riesman has examined some of the causes of alienation. As everyone knows, Riesman is no advocate of conformity; to the concept of adjustment, as currently achieved by what he calls "other-direction," he opposes the concept of autonomy. But autonomy is also opposed to alienation. That is, Riesman believes that it is possible for the individual to be himself in our

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society and that our society is by no means wholly bad. He welcomes an economy of abundance, sees the increase in leisure as an opportunity for good, and even finds something to praise in the mass media.

Such moderation infuriates the intransigent critics of the status quo. Norman Mailer, for example, in *Dissent*, speaking as a Socialist, berates Riesman for pretending that the class struggle no longer exists, and then goes on to comment with some anguish on Riesman's appeal to the liberals: "In the enormous reversal of emphasis which characterizes Riesman's work—the absence of ruling classes, the replacement of competition by cooperation, the change in American character from the stereotype of the brash aggressive man to the other-directed man, one may well wonder whether Riesman, despite his sincere intentions to invigorate thought and to make people 'see' reality, is not really encouraging thought in circles, passive thought, but thought which gives the illusion of making strides, emitting energy, and approaching discovery. Is this not his basic appeal to the liberal who wants precisely to have thought which elicits an aura of excitement but does not force him to relinquish to his ideas any important part of his ambitions or his comforts? . . . At last all things are equal, are justifiable—one is drawn to quietism and acceptance."

It might be felt that this was mere parody, that no one could seriously argue that David Riesman is an advocate of quietism and acceptance. But Mailer is in earnest. And at the end, after an emotional restatement of his faith in socialism, he voices the even more preposterous charge that Riesman's thinking "revolves around the old saw that the rich are miserable and the poor lead simple happy lives."

What one sees depends on what one looks for. Writing in *Perspectives*, Lionel Trilling maintained that the world of wealth and power was recognizing the intellectuals as never before. In rebuttal, Irving Howe admitted the fact but regarded it as a dangerous sign. As Robert Warshow pointed out in a letter to *Partisan Review*, Mr. Howe has himself enjoyed some of this institutional recognition—has served on the staff of *Time*, is teaching at Brandeis University—but these experiences have not softened him. Sometimes

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he seems to be arguing in a circle: the intellectual would be better off without recognition because then he could attack society for not recognizing him.

Probably it is unsafe to generalize about the present status of the intellectuals. As Trilling asserts and Howe grants, the institutional world holds out some handsome opportunities, which seem to nourish some intellectuals and desiccate others. The more influence the intellectuals have, especially in government, the more acutely suspicious a large section of the population becomes. But if there has been no such net gain as Trilling seems to believe, there has been no such great loss as Howe maintains.

Even if it could be proved that the status of the intellectual has deteriorated, one would still have to ask whether this deterioration should be made the basis for a rejection of what we have now in America. One would have at least to balance against it the great material gains that are being enjoyed by the majority of the people. Such a calculation is hard to make. One can imagine, as Aldous Huxley did in *Brave New World*, a society in which everyone is richly endowed with material goods and everyone believes himself to be happy and yet in which the life of the mind is dead. But, in spite of Dr. Fromm's gloomy diatribes, it is hard to believe that we have arrived as such a point or are in any imminent danger of doing so. If our cultural level is low—and, whatever else may be true, it is lower than any of us would choose—there is no evidence that it is low because our standard of living is high and, therefore, no reason to assume that we have to reject our material prosperity in order to raise it.

One's objection to the intransigents is not that they criticize contemporary America. On the contrary, that is why one values them. Along with much that is wrongheaded, they say much that needs to be said. Probably they are right in charging that some of us, in our desire to defend our society against attacks that seem to us both unfair and dangerous, are less critical than we ought to be. But somehow they work too hard at being critical. Some of them seem determined to coddle every eccentricity, to cherish every grievance, to inflame every sore spot and sharpen every rough edge, lest they find their discontent diminishing. And in the end one comes to

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distrust not so much their detailed judgments as the general quality of their feeling about contemporary life.

Of course, everyone plays his hunches, and the most anyone can do is to explain, insofar as he understands them, the circumstances that may have given him his particular bent. For myself, I have been living for the past twenty years in a small town in upstate New York and have earned my livelihood as a free-lance writer, a publisher's adviser, and an occasional lecturer. During these twenty years my income has remained nearly constant. In relation to my neighbors, I was rich in the thirties and comfortably well off in the forties, but today I am close to average. It cannot be said that I regard prosperity as good for the nation because it is good for me, since, in terms of what a dollar will buy, it so far hasn't proved to be.

But all of us, I trust, can look a little way beyond our bank account and our credit rating. Having lived in one place for what is, as contemporary American experience goes, a long time, I am able to measure the course of two decades of American history in terms of a fairly large number of individual lives. I believe that most of my neighbors are better people than they were fifteen or twenty years ago. Certainly they are healthier: they eat better food, and they can and do pay for the services of doctors and dentists. They are also more generous, less suspicious of their fellow men, more inclined to participate in the life of the community. They have not become saints or sages, but most of them lead more satisfying and more useful lives than they did. Since I know of no reason for supposing that the factory and white-collar workers of my town —and they make up almost the entire population—aren't representative, I am encouraged to believe that prosperity is a good thing.

Nor do I personally find it unpleasant to live in a technologically advanced society. When we moved to the country twenty years ago, we had to accept rather primitive conditions, and we were willing to do so for the sake of country living. Now we have the country living together with almost all the comforts of urban life that we want: we have our running water, our electric lights, our central heat; we have the appliances that save labor in an im-

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portant way; we have a car; we have a radio and a record player. It is true that we are offered a thousand gadgets we can't afford, but we don't need them and, for the most part, don't even want them.

When I look about at my neighbors, I see no evidence that they are living standardized lives. When a bunch of men get to talking about their work, as they sometimes do at a meeting of the fire company, it becomes clear that most of them have jobs in which they take a degree of satisfaction. But the more important part of their lives is led after working hours. The more I know, the more I am fascinated by the diverse ways in which these people use their extra income and their extra time. This man has gone in for stock-car racing and that one for raising saddle horses. Tom devotes as much time to the fire company as he does to his job; Dick grows gladiolas; Harry spends two or three nights a week bowling. A list of their hobbies, avocations, and community activities could go on for page after page, and if not all the items could be considered praiseworthy, at least there would be no lack of variety. Most of them, as I have said, are factory workers, and probably for that reason, there is little nonsense about keeping up with the Joneses. In an upper-middle-class suburb, I am sure, there would be more of the sort of thing that bothers the dissenters, more jockeying for status, more concern with approval, less tolerance of differences. But the suburbs are not all of America, and if it is true that the workers tend to model themselves on the middle class, and in outward respects often cannot be distinguished from its members, there also seems to be a tendency on the part of many middle-class people to adopt the more relaxed manners of the workers.

Even if the transformation of our society could be measured solely in material terms—and I am convinced that it can't—it would still be important. Haven't we, for instance, achieved a large part of what socialism has traditionally set as its goal? Isn't what we have exactly what most of the backward peoples everywhere on the globe would like to get? Isn't it fair to say that the United States is riding the wave of the future? The forces that are transforming the whole world have reached their highest development here, and our productive capacity holds out the best hope men have ever had that poverty can be abolished everywhere. Mere abundance of goods

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isn't enough, but surely it is the way to begin. As one of the most intransigent of British rebels, George Orwell, a favorite with many of our own dissenters, once said: "How right the working classes are in their 'materialism.' How right they are to realize that the belly comes before the soul, not in the scale of values but in point of time."

Reviewing Murray Kempton's *Part of Our Time*, Leslie Fiedler, who stands with the dissenters on some issues but not on others, took exception to Kempton's "philistine conviction that our major problems have all been solved." "How hard it is to be just in these matters!" he exclaims. "Of course, it is a fact that men without a dream have improved Negro-White relations, taught labor and management to mitigate their conflicts, extended social security, etc., etc. But the real and remaining problem that vexed those sensitive enough and desperate enough to dream the dream of community Mr. Kempton does not trouble to mention: the drying up of creativity, the flight to conformity, the obsession with violence, the enervating fear of war and poverty, the alienation from each other, from their work, and from the natural world itself." It is far from certain that the reforms of which Mr. Fiedler rather condescendingly approves were brought about by men without a dream, but at any rate they were achieved, whatever problems may remain.

A glandular optimist such as Morris Ernst may predict utopia by 1976, but most of us have less cheerful views about the future. In any case it is the essence of the human condition that the really important problems can never be solved. In C. P. Snow's *The New Men*, the narrator says of one of the characters: "For to Martin it was jet-clear that, despite its emollients and its joys, individual life was tragic: a man was ineluctably alone, and it was a short way to the grave. But, believing that with stoical acceptance, Martin saw no reason why social life should also be tragic: social life lay within one's power, as human loneliness and death did not, and it was the most contemptible of the false-profound to confuse the two." There is some such confusion, it seems, in Mr. Fiedler's thinking, as there is, at the opposite end of the scale, in Mr. Ernst's. That we cannot do everything is no reason for not doing what we can.

I am not counseling resignation, acceptance, passivity, but pa-

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tience and hard work. As we used to be told by apologists for the Soviet Union, you can't expect everything to go smoothly in a revolution. No one should have been foolish enough to suppose that the masses of the American people, given a high standard of living and a lot of leisure, would all make good use of them. They may learn to make better use of them later on, but there is no guarantee of that. Nevertheless, the fact that they have been given a chance to try may be regarded as a challenge rather than as a cause for despair.

It is the great weakness of the dissenters that they exaggerate the evils they attack, and particularly the evil of conformity. As Fiedler says, how hard it is to be just! Mass production depends on the fact that large numbers of people want or can be persuaded to think they want the same thing at the same time, but it is not true that the result is standardization. There are always people who want something different, and in an economy of abundance the demand is satisfied. While Dr. Fromm complains, justly enough, about "a bread which is tasteless and not nourishing," heaven knows how many housewives are baking their own bread—or, for that matter, how many householders have unearthed and begun to use an old-fashioned ice cream freezer. As Ernst points out in his *Utopia 1976*, a vast industry rests on the do-it-yourself idea, and a list of hobby magazines indicates the staggering variety of ways in which Americans spend their leisure hours.

But, the dissenters insist, the pressure to conform is always there. So it is, but it can be and is being resisted. A not too unsympathetic European observer, Czeslaw Milosz, commenting on America, speaks of "the spiritual death of people condemned to work hard all day and to swallow the poison of films and television at night." I suppose that Mr. Milosz might be convinced that the American working day has become fairly humane, but probably no one could make him believe that Americans not only can but actually do turn off their TV sets when they are bored.

The beginning of wisdom in our age seems to me to be summed up in the phrase, "You don't have to." "Are we," Allan Seager has asked, "to spend our lives using more or less valued articles to keep workingmen off the dole?" His reply is, "Yes, I guess we are."

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Mine would be, "Not unless we choose to. Our productive system can be kept just as busy with worthy articles as with unworthy ones." In what seems to be an echo of his novel, *Amos Berry*, Seager goes on: "Probably most of these complainers drive cars and listen to phonograph records, though if consistency has any value they should play their own fiddles and walk." There is a better as well as a more practical consistency than that involved in a total rejection of the fruits of industrialism. It consists in taking from industrialism only what you want, in fiddling when you want to fiddle and in listening to the phonograph when you want to hear the masters, in walking when you feel like walking and driving a car when you have to get somewhere in a hurry. In practice, of course, everybody does make such choices, but most of us exercise our freedom of choice a good deal less than we might.

Making a series of choices is considerably less dramatic than damning a whole culture to hell and gone. The great trouble with moderation, the dissenters say, is that it leads so easily to passivity, and they have a point. Many intellectuals today are almost completely oblivious to political and social problems. Things are going along pretty well, they say to themselves, and if they aren't there's nothing we can do about it, and, some of them add, we just don't want to get in trouble. So they hole up in their ivory towers.

One doesn't have to be a hell raiser to regard passivity as a danger. We can't afford it, what with the threat of atomic war, the erosion of civil liberties, the persistence of inequalities. But these are evils about which the "responsible and moderate" intellectuals —the liberals—have done quite as much as the dissenters. They have, in all probability, done more, though they may have said less. One needn't endorse every act of Americans for Democratic Action, for instance, or the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, to believe that they have, in their different ways, had a healthy influence on contemporary American life.

The twenties were fun, and the thirties, in their grim way, were exciting. The fifties, by comparison, seem pretty dull. On the one hand, everybody but the dissenting intellectuals is happy about American prosperity. On the other hand, nobody can really relax in view of the perils of fission and fusion. There are plenty of

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battles for the liberal to fight, but it is wearing to have to fight always on two fronts—against the Communists and against our own reactionaries. Issues are confused, and wherever one stands, one is likely to be embarrassed by some of the people who are also standing there.

Yet we cannot afford irresponsibility just for the sake of relieving our feelings and stirring up a little excitement. What most of us very well know, when we get right down to it, is that no one has a large enough view of the way in which human life is being transformed in this country and in the world to be entitled to make dogmatic judgments. "Blind unreasoning rejection" may be, as Irving Howe says, "healthier" than blind unreasoning acceptance, but it is not more intelligent. The United States is neither utopia nor a hell hole, and, if we cannot make it the former, we can keep it from becoming the latter. Not only because this country is a great power but also because it leads in the productive revolution, what happens here affects the entire world. The good old days when it was enough to be against the government have gone, and it is fortunate that the liberals, recognizing that fact, have grown responsible and moderate.

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Science in Paris in the Spring

JOHN TYLER BONNER

THE YEAR I HAD MY SABBATICAL LEAVE we stayed in Paris and I did my research in a biological laboratory at the Collège de France. To get to work each morning I took a bus that stopped at one corner of the Luxembourg garden, and from there I could walk through the garden, down Boulevard Saint Michel, through the Sorbonne and into the Collège de France. Those walks have left pleasant memories. It was mainly the garden that was so beautiful in the early morning. I can see now those clear spring days when the clipped chestnuts were just turning green and the thin sun barely warmed the cool ground. Some mornings the gardeners would be rolling out the potted palms from their winter quarters in the *orangerie,* a process which I suspect had taken place every April for the past two hundred years. In the chairs by the fountain there would be a few students getting a short drink of sun before a morning of dusty classrooms.

On Boulevard Saint Michel everything bustled, and I would quicken my steps. The shortest way was to turn right at the Place de la Sorbonne, past the statue of Auguste Comte, past the baroque chapel of the Sorbonne with Richelieu's tomb, and through a rather dreary corridor of the Sorbonne itself. To check myself, to tarry a moment before facing the realities of the day, I would read the notices on the bulletin board in the hallway. I never read bulletin boards in America, nor do I know what impression they

✪ JOHN TYLER BONNER is a biologist teaching at Princeton University and doing research on problems of growth and development. He was pursuing these studies during the sabbatical leave described in this article. Mr. Bonner is the author of two books, one of which is the recently published *Cells and Societies.*

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would have on a Frenchman; but I was sure that as a foreigner I would get some subtle understanding of the French from this bulletin board. It consisted primarily of notices of examinations in the different sciences; for instance, it would say that on May 3 a Monsieur somebody or the other would defend his doctoral thesis on the diatom population fluctuation and ecology in the Seine estuary. I had heard that these were public affairs and I always promised myself that should the subject be of any interest to me I would attend one of the examinations.

The last lap to the laboratory was down the somewhat severe Rue des Écoles and then to the grilled courtyard of the Collège de France. Every day I was aware of the plaque on the corner of the building that said this was the laboratory of Claude Bernard, and if I missed that, his statue is out front, facing the lodging house where he spent his later years. I never heard an outsider give a lecture in physiology at the Collège de France without acknowledging what a privilege it was to give a lecture in the institution of Bernard. His presence is almost felt, for he symbolizes all the famous men whose names are inscribed on the walls of the Collège de France. Besides the old and well-known names, there are the more recent ones of those professors and assistants who were killed during the Second World War. I no longer remember the names, but some of them were women, and under the name of one is: "Tortured and killed at Auschwitz."

The Collège de France was started by Francis I in the sixteenth century as a haven for those scholars who wished to be free of the Church. The Sorbonne, along with the rest of France, has long since changed and is a completely free university; but the Collège de France has altered little except for the fact that instead of the original handful, it now has about forty professors. The closest thing in this country might be the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, for the professors can give no degree nor follow what is known as a "formal" education. They must give a series of twenty or thirty lectures each year, and each year on a different subject. The appalling thing to an American is that except for a few well-known and popular individuals, such as Henri

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Bergson, who always packed the house, the lectures were poorly attended; there might be a mere three or four in the audience in a large room. The lectures I attended were absolutely first-rate, carefully prepared and given in a most formal fashion, yet no one from "across the street," that is, none of the students, came. It is an old tradition for them not to appear, but not all traditions are happy.

The new laboratories at the Collège are well equipped, and each professor has a good staff of assistants at different degrees of advancement. There is a *sous-directeur,* who would amount to an associate professor in America, and an *assistant,* somewhat the same as our assistant professors. Then usually there is a group of fellows from the Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques, which is a bit like our National Science Foundation fellows; but, of course, if they are working for a degree they are formally working with someone at the Sorbonne. (A Ph.D. in France is a degree that is usually not received by a candidate until he is in his early thirties. It is, therefore, quite normal for someone to take from six to a dozen years on his thesis.) Then also in a laboratory there are a bevy of young girls who do everything that our technicians might. They always seemed hard working and cheerful and skillful.

And I should mention the janitors and the shopman, for each morning it was necessary to shake the hand of every person in the laboratory. In the beginning it seemed a bit of a bother, but soon I became quite used to it and would even find myself solemnly shaking hands with my wife and children at lunch time. I also began to learn something of the circulation of each person in the laboratory, for some of the hands were warm and some icy cold.

Overheating is something peculiar to Russians and Americans (it is a frontier characteristic), while in most of Europe the specialty is underheating. With my long woolen underwear and sweater I would make out pretty well until about eleven-thirty in the morning, but by then the little energy I obtained from one *croissant* and a cup of coffee at breakfast had been dissipated. I would begin to shake rather awkwardly and dash home; in the afternoon I was always full of some delicate dinner and wine and kept going

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happily until quite late. The only particularly bad time was when everyone went away during the Easter holidays and the heat was completely turned off for the year. I remember it clearly: I used to sit at my desk for minutes at a time, fascinated with watching the steam from my breath.

There came a period when I had to make microscope slides of some protozoa which required techniques of fixing and staining that were new to me. I was told that any one of the girls about would do it for me, but I insisted that that was pointless since before long I would go back to America. So I became a pupil and, I fear, a rather dull-witted one at that. The difficulty first began when I started to follow the written directions and found that the slides were hopeless. Then I would watch one of the girls do the same thing (with slight variations that I slowly perceived) and the results were beautiful. When I would ask questions about the variations, the answer was always, "Oh, that is of no importance," and she would proceed to do it a different way, again with equally good results. I did not really understand what was going on until one day I talked to an American friend who was taking a course at a cooking school. She told me of her trials and difficulties and I realized that slide-making, like cooking, is an art, and no number of cookbooks or manuals of histology will make it otherwise. The point was again illustrated to me upon receiving directions on how to make a wheat infusion to grow certain protozoa. I was told to take about so much wheat in the palm of my hand and put it in about so much pond water and boil for about ten minutes. To this day I have kept the same culture of protozoa flourishing in the same manner since I have the uneasy feeling that if I should weigh out the exact amounts and write it in my book, they would die immediately.

It was, I confess, a shock to me to find differences in simple laboratory procedures. These differences extended not only into differences in method, but also the basic equipment used was often new to me and invariably as useful as the American counterparts. No doubt the reason is that so much of our scientific heritage comes from Germany and England, while France has, to a certain degree,

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existed in isolation and continued on her own way. This matter extends far beyond laboratory glassware and involves the people themselves and their printed works. There are, of course, particularly among the older professors, many who know America, England and all the other scientific communities, and furthermore are themselves well known outside of France. A few of the younger men are following in their footsteps, but the vast majority of them do not have the means to travel nor the opportunity to go abroad. Many of them are excellent scientists doing fine work, and I was ashamed when I first arrived over how little I knew of them. I was not sufficiently familiar with their general approach to the problems to be aware of their progress. It was, however, a mutual affair, for what I lacked in knowledge of the French work, they lacked of the American work. Language is, of course, the biggest barrier since both peoples are notoriously uneager to speak or even read the language of the other. In this country we have no inferiority complex because we do not have our own hand on the pulse of French science, and likewise in France they are quite content and in no way feel behind. They rely, as we do, upon the many really distinguished and grand men of science who are both national and international, to summarize and synthesize the trend of modern science in the world.

The process is so slow and the road so hard for a man to achieve a really eminent position that it sometimes seems amazing that any have reached it. A professorship at the Sorbonne or at the Collège de France is a glorious position that has no counterpart in this country. It is in no way akin to our National Academy. The French, in fact, have the equivalent in the Institut de France, but this is the reward for fame and eminence of a few, and like our National Academy or the Nobel Prize, there is not always a complete agreement that the honor has been conferred upon the right person or that all people in it are equally deserving.

The better I came to know my fellow scientists, the more I became obsessed with the idea that perhaps I might better understand them if I attended a Ph.D. examination; I felt that perhaps there I would see the inner structure, the backbone of their scien-

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tific life. Fortunately, one morning on my way to work, there was a notice on the bulletin board of an examination on a subject that was of some interest. And so, several days later I entered the dark, narrow, steeply inclined lecture room in the Sorbonne a few minutes before ten, the time when the examination was to begin. The candidate was actually a man who worked in the Collège de France, so I was interested to see what role his particular professor would play in the examination, since formally he had no connection with the Sorbonne or the examination.

An audience of thirty people or so had gathered, and these I soon realized were largely friends of the candidate—family, school chums, and all his associates in the laboratory. I was especially shocked when I spotted the man who was to be examined and realized he had been a nodding acquaintance of mine for some time, although I had not known his name. It was disturbing because I had always assumed he had long since received his degree. He was in his middle thirties; a rather angular Basque-looking man with a firm, composed face and an easy, assured manner. In America, had I known him to be a biologist, I would have gauged him to be an associate professor, and it turned out, as the examination proceeded, that his maturity and ability would have justified this guess.

I was told beforehand that in these examinations there is only one person of importance besides the examiners. He is a man from the Ministry of Education who comes to observe the examination and make his own judgment of the man. All universities in France are run by the state and, therefore, this evaluation will follow the candidate for the rest of his life; it is of importance to his whole future employment. I kept surveying the audience carefully from my side of the room, hoping to spot him, but I was never quite certain. There were a number of possibilities, but the most likely was a mustached, small gray man who had arrived wearing a black Homburg and a great white handkerchief spouting from the front pocket of his double-breasted, navy-blue overcoat.

When the time came to begin, the three examining professors (the "jury," as it is called) assembled behind a rather judicial-looking bench at the side of the room and immediately went into a

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brief huddle. The chairman, or more correctly the president of the jury, who was a well-known zoologist, then addressed the distinguished Collège de France professor who was sitting in the audience, and asked him to join the jury. There were many gallant protestations, many gracious bows and cajoling words, and finally the jury became four.

The candidate was then given the floor, with the jury on his left and the audience in front of him, and he talked for a full hour delivering a lecture with lantern slides and blackboard. In America we would have called it a seminar, and a very good one at that. It summarized a great number of important and painstaking experiments. The conclusions were clear and penetrating. The delivery, which did not surprise me by that time, was smooth and flowing. At any scientific meeting in France, even when short, fifteen-minute papers are given, it is rare to find a person who cannot push out even, well-balanced and pleasing sentences. Some ability in public oratory seems to be a fairly national characteristic, and I suppose it finds its roots in the French system of early education.

In his concluding paragraph, the candidate made it clear that he considered it a privilege and a pleasure to work under the direction of his professor, and he also thanked his colleagues for all their help and encouragement. Then, with a final flourish, he yielded to the president of the jury. Now, I thought to myself in a rather bloodthirsty mood, for the seats were getting a bit hard, now come the fireworks, the devastating questions that will pierce this calm assurance. How could anyone stand up to four such formidable looking men?

The president, to my surprise, did not question, but began a speech. It was more than a speech; it was a lengthy plea. He said, in substance, that what France needs is leaders in physiology and, more specifically, what he meant was people of the candidate's ability and talent. It was, he felt, almost a desperate need *pour la France* and he wished the man every success in the future. Then he turned to the professor from the Collège de France and asked him to proceed. In a rich, booming, rolling voice this important man, brimming with a look of competence and success, said that many

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years ago he was asked if there would be a place in his laboratory for the candidate. Since that moment when he decided to take him on, he would like to say here and now, to the public (expanding his arm in the general direction of the audience and glowering at us), and to you personally (riveting the candidate with his Olympian gaze) that he had never once, these long years, regretted this decision. He even would go farther to say that he was proud of any part he might have played in the development of the candidate.

By this time I was quite carried away. I felt that these compliments were undoubtedly justified from what I had seen of his performance and was delighted that the jurists did not hesitate to come out with it. I gathered later that this is by no means a routine procedure and many candidates find the going exceedingly difficult. But not with this man, for all four members of the jury had something good to say of him—his industry, his ingenuity, his experiments, his ability to write; and a considerable point was made in praise of his ability to deliver a lecture, which I felt was directed at the government agent somewhere planted in the room.

There followed a short period of discussion of the second part of his thesis, but as time was running out this was cut short, and the jury rose to disappear for their deliberations. The whole audience rose with them and remained standing until they had left the room. Then everybody started talking and the candidate came to say hello to many friends up and down the aisle. Everybody was quite relaxed except myself—I really began to worry because they were taking so long. I kept trying to imagine what might be the difficulty, for everything seemed to have gone so well. Finally, a good fifteen minutes later, the door burst open and we all jumped to our feet. The silence was complete as the jury stood before us and the president stepped forward. He said, in a solemn tone, that he had the great honor and the great pleasure to announce the fact that the candidate had been judged worthy of the degree of Doctor of Science with a *mention très honorable*. The applause was deafening; the jury, in succession, grabbed the hand of the smiling Doctor of Science and then all his friends descended to congratulate him.

The morning had been spoiled for work, and it being a beauti-

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ful May day, it was easy to avoid work in the afternoon, too. With the whole family we made one of our favorite excursions to the Jardin des Plantes. The children loved to look at the animals and push them pieces of stale bread, and after we had done that for a good while, we slowly walked down the beautiful, thin, rectangular rows of flowers all the way from the statue of Lamarck to the statue of Buffon. I had the feeling, as I saw the regular embroidery pattern of the flowers, the clipped rows of sycamore trees, the graceful, round pond of water lilies at the feet of le Comte de Buffon sitting there easy and confident in his armchair—I had the feeling that I was seeing here what I had seen at the examination and what I had seen during my whole visit in France: order, grace, and the confidence and satisfaction that come with tradition.

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Herring-Gull

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

Run seaward, launch upon the air, and sound your desolate cry
Over these shores and waters; the wind on which you rest
Air-borne, as sea-borne on the ocean's undulant breast,
Buoys you on, hunting the waste with hungry eye.

Are there, beyond these crowded shores, beyond your call
And waiting your return to their sandy bed,
Young, ravenous beaks strained skyward, gaping to be fed?
A need is on you, a great need is on us all.

Balance upon the wind, send out your desolate cry
To the four corners of the waste, your clamor is
The clamor of life in bondage to the old necessities—
Torment that is the thrust of some immortal joy.

✪ JOHN HALL WHEELOCK has long been a well-known American poet. In August of this year Scribners' will publish his *Poems Old and New,* a collection covering fifty years of Mr. Wheelock's writing and featuring forty new poems and selections from his seven earlier books.

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Catholic and Protestant Theologies in Outline

GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S.J.

IT IS BECOMING EMBARRASSING TO BE A THEOLOGIAN, because everywhere people are talking religion and compelling anyone who has studied divinity to answer every type of question. The Protestant theologian must know not only his own theology but Catholic theology as well, and the same is true for the Catholic. It is very difficult for one man to know even superficially all of the theology of his own tradition, and all but impossible to know intimately and sympathetically the theologies of the other traditions. To keep up comprehensively with all the theological work done in the four corners of the globe is simply out of the question. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, a bird's-eye view of contemporaneous Catholic and Protestant theologies can be offered to the layman who wishes to know "what it is all about."

The Catholic theological tradition is not a series of historically contiguous but different theologies; it is a continuous effort in a uniform line. A twentieth-century theologian can go back to the thirteenth or sixteenth century and not be in an unknown, strange world. He is quite at home, because it is the very house he is living in today. Certain necessary remodeling jobs have been done and certain additions have been made, but it is still the same edifice, the old rooms are still lived in. There is central heating now and electricity, but the fireplaces have not been removed. There are elevators, but the magnificent stairs of the older time are still there. Even the moat can still be seen, though today it is used for flower beds, and the drawbridge is always down.

✪ GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S.J., former dean of the faculty of theology at Catholic University of Chile, is now professor of ecclesiology at the Jesuit theologate at Woodstock, Maryland. His articles have appeared in *Theological Studies, Thought, America, New Republic,* and *Gregorianum.* In addition, Father Weigel has lectured at many universities in the United States and abroad.

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The original builders were concerned with doing a solid piece of work. The modern builders see that it was a solid job, more solid than they singlehandedly can do today. Hence, they keep the old and add organically those parts which are needed to make the house serve in our time and for which allowance had been made by the original builders. Plenty of room was left for the successors, and the ground plan was drawn to permit new developments which could not be foreseen in their time.

The Protestant theological house does not follow such a plan; it is really a rambling complex of buildings. At any moment it obeys the dictates of the tastes of the time, but one can see in the whole that there were once other structures where present ones now stand. The older parts have been torn down, though elements thereof were employed in the present erections. If you examine the rock gardens about the edifice, you will see that they are actually the ruins of earlier buildings, gently enhanced today with flowers, although they serve no functional purpose. If we look closely, we shall also see that the original lines of the house have been changed. The building does not face precisely as it did in the beginning. Looking over the grounds, we can see that some parts of the old building were burned down in a conflagration.

Let me explain the parable. Protestant theology is a function of Protestant religion. That is obvious enough, but it necessarily brings with it consequences which are not so obvious. Many Protestants and Catholics have considered Protestantism as a highly individualistic religious vision. However, in our time we all see that this description of Protestantism is misleading. Protestantism from its onset was intensely communal by desire and theory.

What distinguished the Catholic community from the Protestant community was the fact that for the Protestant, in principle, there was no final authority in the community. Over, above, and outside the community floated the Bible. Its authority was originally considered final, but the community, on principle, had no authority to define its meaning. The fellowship necessarily had the power to exclude members who did not conform to the total community's interpretation, but it had no structural norm whereby another understanding could definitively be declared in-

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valid. In practice it tried to do so, but the nuclear principle of Protestantism contradicted the practice. As a result, the fragmentation of Protestantism was inevitable. With the same right that the first reformers claimed to reform the actual Church in the light of their sincere understanding of the Bible, new reformers within the Protestant community again reformed the Church in the light of their sincere understanding of revelation. This process by inner logic has continued until our own time. But no matter how often the fragmentation took place, it never gave final authority to the community; and with this lack, future fragmentation could not be avoided. The World Council of Churches is a most interesting phenomenon because it is the modern Protestant's impressive attempt to overcome the inner drive to fragmentation.

In the light of this basic fact in Protestantism, Protestant theology cannot follow the Catholic norm of theology which is the definitive teaching of the living Church. In the beginning, the only Protestant norm was the Scripture understood in the light of the infant philology of the sixteenth century. This could produce a Biblical theology, but logically it could give no system. Yet, one of the most important products of the early reform was Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a perfect model of system.

It is interesting to see how Calvin formed his synthesis. As an outline he followed the non-Biblical Apostles' Creed. His methodological postulates were as follows: the inerrancy of Scripture; the luminosity of the Bible to the faith-enlightened; the basic reliability of the theology of the early Church, though this reliability was not universal or absolute. In the light of these postulates he could teach the doctrine of salvation by confident trust alone; the total and abiding sinfulness of man, incapacitating him for just action; the divine overlooking of this incapacity through grace, not only freely but immediately given by God in obedience to the free predestination of some men to salvation. He introduced one important negative concept: the Church did not sanctify its members, but rather was a community of those who were immediately sanctified by God. Consequently the Church's action was not productive of grace through her sacraments but only the occasion whereby God inspired trust in the predestined. The Church was merely the

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custodian of the Bible and the ingathering for the trusting elect.

In this system the formal and material elements are not immediately Scriptural. They are largely Augustinian, and Calvin had a conscious affection for Augustine. By his postulate that the early Church was, by and large, reliable in her theology, he could take as much of Augustine as he wanted without being forced to take it all. He could always stop Augustine by an ultimate appeal to Scripture. What he did take from Augustine he could justify by claiming to see it in the Scripture. However, as it was evident to him and to others, the Scriptures were understood differently by other reformers, the Lutherans and the Anabaptists, for example. He lamented this difference, but he found a basic unity in the Protestant positions inasmuch as they all made the Scripture the only final authority, thus opposing themselves to Rome, which made its teaching the final norm.

The eighteenth century changed all that. Rationalism, Kantianism and Romanticism all supplied major premises from which the Biblical affirmations could be dialecticized into conclusions utterly different from those derived in the previous two centuries. The nineteenth century gave the world historicism and Hegelianism, and these in their turn brought out new formulations of theological doctrine. By the twentieth century, liberalism—naturalistic, ethicist, and optimistic—deduced from the Scriptures theological positions quite alien to the theology of the reformers. The First World War ended that phase, and Karl Barth successfully urged a return to the content of the Bible as the revelation of a transcendental God. However, he used as his interpreting philosophy an existentialism manifested in Kierkegaard and developed by Scheler and Heidegger.

All of these theologies in some way or other are Biblical. However, except for the fundamentalists, the Bible does not occupy the sole or even main place. Other sources of data are recognized, such as the beliefs of the churches, personal experience, or the findings of science.

It might be of value to point out some questions which today are of interest to the theologians of all schools. The first interest beyond a doubt is the question of the Church. The nature and role

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of the Church are being studied with depth and anxiety by all modern theologians. The Catholics are no longer exclusively engrossed in the juridical framework of the Church, and they are stressing the supernatural, spiritual reality of Catholicism. Quite germane to this work was the new examination of the relations of the Church to the State. This has been going on now for about fifteen years.

On the Protestant side the interest in the Church stems from the ecumenical movement which began some fifty years ago and in 1948 finally flowered into the World Council of Churches. Both at Amsterdam, which was the first meeting place of the Council, and subsequently at Lund, where in 1952 its subsidiary Commission on Faith and Order met, voices from all over the Christian world gave their opinions and ideas.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for Protestants to achieve a detailed consensus because there is no final authority in the whole gamut of churches, not even in any one church. Consequently, the views run from extreme to extreme. Extreme liberals think that "the Church" is a label to collectivize the churches, which would include the synagogues as well as the Christian tabernacles. They give no more value to the churches than they give to other communities. They are for them voluntary associations freely entered into and freely constructed according to the wishes of the members who compose them. There is nothing holy about a church, although it is a good thing—provided the group keeps out of the secular field and represents the most liberating tendency in a forward-looking society.

The fundamentalists still cling more or less to the notions of the reformers. The visible Church is a community which is the custodian and expositor of the Bible. Hence, the Church is a people of the Book, a fellowship of those who are enlightened and saved by the Scripture. They will admit that there is also a larger view of the Church in which the Church is an invisible union of those who confidently trust in God because of the work of Jesus. This union is very holy because it is made up only of the living saints united with Christ. However, the union, though present in the world, acts only invisibly, mysteriously, and without any conjoint

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plan or effort of the members who do not even know each other.

Between these extremes we have the position reached or approached by most of the other Protestant theologians. They recognize that the Church is more than a voluntary society of ethically minded men. They see that the Church is not a flowering of the Bible into a society, but rather that the Bible itself is a flower of the Church. It is not the Bible which carries the Church, but the Church which carries the Bible. The holy community is the carrier of revelation, but they still hold that its normative expression is the Bible. The Church of itself is holy because of its mission, but unfortunately it is very human. In consequence, it exists in a state of hostile division. Not one of the churches is the Church, though all are of it. Not one of the bodies nor yet all together have lived up to their high vocation. The Church as she is in history is not only a sinful but even a sinning Church. This doctrine came out quite clearly in the 1954 meeting of the World Council at Evanston.

The Church-State problem has different dimensions for the Protestant and for the Catholic. For the Catholics the thorny and annoying question is whether Catholic doctrine includes the affirmation of the necessity of the legal establishment of Catholicism in any community whatever its religious constituency. The problem is abstract and in the order of ideal principle because it is obvious to all in the debate that establishment in a religiously pluralistic community is, in practice, out of the question. For the Protestants there is no real problem because, by and large, they deplore legal establishment on principle even where it exists in practice.

For the Protestants the question is not Church versus State, but rather the relation of Christianity to the secular. Here the question is vital. There are all kinds of solutions offered. Karl Barth considers the secular order as existing under the dominion of sin and for the punishment of sin. The Christian cannot avoid being in it, but he should not be of it. The Swiss theologian is not only cool but even hostile to an organized Christian opposition to communism. An extremely opposed position is that of Dr. Charles Lowry of Washington, who has founded a movement to unite believers of all churches to combat communism on religious grounds. An inter-

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mediate position would be that of Reinhold Niebuhr, who does not hesitate to pass adverse judgment on communism in the light of Christian doctrine, but who promptly adds that campaigns against it are morally ambiguous because selfish as well as godly motives are involved. For him Christianity necessarily is against communism, but Christians *de facto* will inevitably oppose it for unworthy motives and in the defense of some partial evil. Niebuhr will not urge Christians to Barthian indifference in the matter, but he warns them that they must not be self-righteous in their opposition because it is shot through with human sinfulness.

The Niebuhrian position is the logical consequence of the Protestant theology on nature and grace. This greater issue is the main theological concern of modern Protestant divines. Can Christianity offer salvation to man in terms of the natural powers of humanity? The old-fashioned liberals, who are by no means mere fossil survivors of the past, give an enthusiastic affirmative to the question. Christianity for them is nothing but an efficient mobilization of human powers to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Against this kind of naturalistic optimism the non-naturalists, like Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr and Tillich, have successfully made war. Old-fashioned liberalism is not the prevailing mood in Protestant theology today. However, we must make it quite clear that the new supernaturalism is a reform of liberalism and not a return to the thorough supernaturalism of former times. Bultmann, Niebuhr and Tillich have no patience with the miraculous, Biblical inerrancy, the literal divinity of Jesus, His resurrection as a physical event, or a final resurrection of the flesh. Supernaturalism in the sense of negation of the universal uniformity of the natural order of process is no more congenial to them than it is to the unreformed liberals. They merely insist that God is not in man, though man is under the judgment of God, of whom we can say nothing valid except through symbolic expression.

An essay at a simplified sketch for this doctrine might take the following form: Man's anxious recognition of his own ephemeral existence, which is always threatened by nothingness, brings him up against the imperious, onward élan at the very heart of all existence. This center cannot be explained according to the categories

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of finity which describe only the events of nature. This mystery is the ground of being, the absolute, the unconditioned, the no-thing to which all things must be referred ultimately. It is, of course, the answer to man's ultimate concern; and that is what we mean by God. It is not reached by meeting or measuring the forms of power which we find in the order of nature, the finite order, which we reduce to intelligibility through finite categories. The natural order moves in the direction of finite ends, utterly indifferent to the cries of man who is pushed onward through a deeper impulse of existence which drives him and all other things as well.

The self-revelation of being can be occasioned by nature, history or the Bible—which is a human witness and a pointer to the revealing God. God does not enter history in any finite form, such as the Bible or any other historical phenomenon must be. He is the ground of being, the *prius* of all history and the term beyond history.

But the supreme and final revelation of God is in Jesus as the Christ. This must not mean that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the revelation, but his life established a *kairos* (opportune moment) wherein the revelation was seen. In this *kairos* the Christ was made manifest. This means that in the vision of those who encountered God because of Jesus, we see the true human answer to the demands of the unconditioned ground of being. There is a total self-surrender to the Lord God in the complete abandonment of all that means self. This is the Pauline *agape* (love) of which Niebuhr speaks and concerning which Nygren wrote so well. The man of *agape* is in Christ. He is a new being. He is risen above the futilities and meanesses of finite existence, including his own. The trusting self-surrender of man to God in *agape* is faith, and this alone saves man. Salvation, of course, is not the heaven or hell of the older traditions except symbolically. Salvation is the finding of meaning for existence in the light of the trans-historical.

Reinhold Niebuhr's contribution to such thought is his insistence on the sinfulness of man. The Scriptural emphasis on man's perversity is the central emphasis in the theology of Niebuhr. It ultimately means that man in all his actions obeys drives of selfishness manifested by pride and sensuality. Man cannot elude this

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inescapable condition. This is the true original sin. However, by trust in God, existentially achieved, these sins need not be the source of hopelessness or nausea. In a whole-souled *agape* founded in confidential trust, man, whose actions always remain morally ambiguous, lives his existence meaningfully in Christ. He is *simul justus et peccator* (paradoxically, at once justified and sinful).

The Catholic position on this same question is different. As Catholic theology sees it, man has a supernatural destiny which means much more than a trans-historical justification. Thus man is a fallen man because of the original sin, an event which inaugurated present history. He is not fallen because he is finite, for finitude of itself only made human sin possible, not inevitable. As a remedy against the fatal virus of original sin, physical though spiritual grace is given to man by God, thanks to the merits of Christ. The justified man, who becomes so by entering into the Body of Christ, which is the Church, can now live a godly life. It is true that he has not totally escaped the vitiating influence of the primal Fall, which is still vestigially present as a proneness to evil, but the influence of this native drag downward is no longer dominant. Man's intellect is still darkened and his will weakened, but the darkness and infirmity are overcome substantially by grace, freely given and freely received. Grave sin is still possible and some lesser degree of sinfulness unavoidable, but on the condition of man's love and contrition these two are objectively wiped away by the loving God.

Because of this rejection of inevitable ungodliness, the justified Christian is not *simul justus et peccator*, but rather *ex injusto fit justus* (out of a sinner a just man is made). A Christian humanism is now logically possible. It is true that man cannot construct the Kingdom of God, but man belongs to the world and by divinized action in the world carries out the hidden design of God in the preparation of history for Christ's second coming, which will usher in the final Kingdom. That will end natural history and begin an endless supernatural epilogue concerning which eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for them who love Him.

Therefore, because of his renewed moral and intellectual strength through the indwelling grace of God, even though sin still

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mars man's life, he can and must work justice in the world. He cannot flee the trials of time but in faith and love meets them, not only in terms of individualistic self-perfection, but also socially, for society is under God no less than the individual. Man has no right to expect that any of his conceived projects, holy and noble though they be, must achieve actualization, because the path of history has been invisibly traced by the hidden God. Yet, he must do what Christ's example calls for and leave the outcome to the Lord of history, who will make it sing his glory. History unwittingly evolves itself, not "ever onward and upward," but in accord with God's inscrutable ends which certainly contain the eschatological salvation of those who love Him.

In this way the justified man is not only free but really obliged to take part in all the activity of humanity—economics, politics, art, science, philosophy and religion—for all these things are in the world and the world is for Christ. The Prince of this World is ever the enemy of Christ, and he will not be crushed until Christ defeats him definitively; but in the meantime the Christian, whose battle is with powers and principalities, fights the Prince of this World precisely because the Christian is in Christ. He is not confused in battle because of the ambiguity of his actions, for that ambiguity cannot destroy the substantial nobility of his action in Christ. This is why the Christian will take a stand without fear. In him there is the inspiration of Christ and the power of the All-High which will lead him along right ways even unto the Mountain of God. For the deficiencies in his movement onward, the Christian begs God's forgiveness, but he does not need to doubt about the essential rectitude of his way, for he is visibly led by Christ living with man in the Church. He can and always will doubt his own performance of his task, but the task itself is not subject to doubt, no matter what comes of it. In Christ Jesus the Christian has already overcome the world. In hope and not in vision the Christian moves on, for his action is based on intellectual faith which has the force of a convincing argument for what he does not see.

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European Journal

LEO GURKO

November 1953

Saint Remy . . .

After washing, the four of us went into the town to look for dinner. At dusk, St. Remy has a muffled air. Occasional figures drift slowly down the side streets which, curving and winding steadily, seem somehow less deserted than if they were straight. The main square is an abnormally large oblong for a French town of this size, surrounded by the usual assortment of cafés, sporting clubs devoted to soccer and motorcycle racing, and miscellaneous shops. Although the evening was chilly, there was a scattering of natives bundled up in old clothes drinking wine, beer, and coffee laced with brandy at sidewalk tables.

On the whole square there was only one restaurant with a menu posted outside. The commonplace character of the announced dishes persuaded us to search elsewhere. In one of the ancient side streets not far from the square, another menu loomed out of the dark. A quick glance revealed *potage à l'Arlésienne*. That was enough. Any place which advertised a specialty of the region this late at night in the depth of a remote provincial town justified its existence. We entered the house, passed through the anteroom of what was quite plainly and unexpectedly a pension, into the dining room in the rear. This room was warm and steamy, the walls covered with paintings of some contemporary genre, the tables filled with diners, chiefly men, many of whom had dark faces and crinkly black hair of a racial cast more Spanish and Levantine than French. We seated ourselves at a table opposite the fireplace and were immediately approached by the inevitable cat and dog scrounging for

✪ LEO GURKO, chairman of the English department at Hunter College, is author of *The Angry Decade* and *Heroes, Highbrows and the Popular Mind.*

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scraps, their eyes filmed with the hungry pathos aroused in domesticated animals by the prospect of eating. Cats and dogs in France do very well; they are allowed a physical freedom not permitted their confreres in America. The Europeans, in general, discipline themselves more than they do their animals. The Americans, on the whole, discipline their animals more than they do themselves.

After a moment, a woman with a red face and rolled-up sleeves approached us from the kitchen—the *patronne,* reeking of condiments, weather-beaten with the long struggle for survival in the close-range warfare of pension life, as toughened and earthy a type as we had yet seen. She took our orders—which included a brief but by no means unpleasant discussion of the potatoes; it was late, the potatoes were gone, but our *Provençale,* after a short silence, agreed to whip up a special batch. She went back to the kitchen where, through the open door, we could see her busy over the black, heavy, coal-burning stove, its fumes filtering slowly around her work-blown hair.

The soup, brought in by her husband, was thick, heavy, delicious, with a potato base, and was followed by veal cutlet and salad equally good. When the cheese, fruit and coffee appeared, an elderly, strongly built man bearing a remarkable resemblance to Walt Whitman came in and sat down at a small table laid for two, immediately to the right of the fireplace. He had a white beard, a square, rugged face with lively blue eyes and a countryman-laborer's outfit that had long since passed its peak. He looked altogether like a philosophical tramp who, despite his age, was still in the prime of his career. He stared at us as he began eating, with a frank curiosity whose unconcealed directness kept it from being offensive. In a short while, he was joined by a woman dressed in clothes that were the female counterpart of his, although her face was considerably softer and more refined, with a delicacy and sensibility feminine in the extreme.

As we were lingering over dessert, the old man addressed us in the most atrocious English we had heard since reaching Europe. He was a painter, he said, and most of the art on the wall was his. What were we? English? Obscurely flattered, we said Americans. That

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seemed to make no difference. He went right on asking questions about what we were doing, and how was it that we were in Provence this late in the year which was the best time because we had it to ourselves, and wasn't it unusual to be traveling *en famille*. He switched to French in the middle of this, his English no longer able to bear the strain. After we had all finished, he took us around the room, commenting on his paintings which seemed like a pastiche of a half-dozen modern schools, full of vigorous brushwork and bold ironies—exactly the kind of canvases which might one day, after the artist's death, leap in value. There flickered through my mind the thought of an investment, but I brushed it aside almost at once as unworthy. The prospect of anyone but the artist making money out of art had always seemed to me repulsive. On parting, he urged us to visit him the next day at his place outside the town, and gave us many explicit directions about how to get there. His wife came up at this point and, in a soft voice, urged us to see them before we left the area. We exchanged identities. His name was Jospeh Thoret. . . .

The next morning, after taking showers in water that began as tepid and soon became cold, we drove out of St. Remy to the Roman triumphal arch standing in lonely clarity on a small, flat plain. Across the way, below the surface of the road, one could see the streets and buildings of the ancient Roman town of Glanum being slowly excavated. We left the car and slanted across the fields past the old abbey where Van Gogh had been confined during his insanity. After beating around the countryside a bit, we came to a rise and hallooed. In a short while, from the distance below, we saw Thoret appear, wave, and move toward us. After some more scrambling, we followed him to his hut where we sat on rocks outside. There, Thoret began to pour out his ideas and feelings about the world, a discourse that, when we left him three hours later, was still flowing on.

He had been a mountain flier who had set records in the 1920's after air combat in the First World War. Then, disgusted with the world, he had retired to this back area of his native Provence where, in the manner of Thoreau, he had built the hut with his own hands and had dug conduits through the fields to bring water from the

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pipelines of St. Remy. He had taken to painting and philosophizing in his later years, and his whole mode of living, down to the shabbiness and shapelessness of his clothes, was a passionate protest against the condition of society. He believed it was lost in the labyrinth of the machine age. His paintings dealt with alcoholics, women staring with hopeless eyes, still-life arrangements that brought out, in their ironic contrasts, the shocks and traumas of modern life—yet all of them were filled with an energy and vitality whose very existence was a denial of the pervasive pessimism.

Our host was full of ideas about politics, too. It was from him that we first heard the name Mendès-France, eight months before it was to electrify Europe. Among the crowd of petty, grasping little egotists who made up the Chamber of Deputies, Mendès-France stood out. He was the only man with a first-rate mind, the only politician in France who would put the interests of the country over party or self-advancement. As for France herself, Thoret continued, she counted for nothing, caught in the middle between the two vast mechanical civilizations of Russia and America. Although at each other's throats, they were essentially alike. The ideal of both was bigger and better materialism: bathtubs, roads, bridges, factories, automobiles, money. Neither, he claimed, was interested in art, culture, spirit, the individual soul, the protection of unorthodoxy. Granted that America was easier to live in because of its republican scaffolding, in its directions and aims it was morally indistinguishable from the Soviet Union. There was no more difference between them than between Rome and Carthage competing for the trade routes of the Mediterranean. Why then did he bother talking to people from what he called "a frigidaire civilization"? Because it was still possible, he felt, to influence America's course of conduct. With Russia, this was quite impossible.

His wife broke in at this point to assure us that everything her husband had said was nonsense, and that we should pay no more attention to it than to the eccentric way in which they lived. This was only an expression of his revolt against the world, and not the reasoned judgments of a philosopher. After this outburst, she subsided into her usual mild silence, but not before receiving from her

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husband a look of cheerful malevolence. "Women do not understand these matters," he said, and taking us by the arm, led us off through a circuitous route across the fields to the abbey. A small tip to the concierge, and our host received the key to Van Gogh's room. Inside it we stood for some moments, in silence, gazing at its smallness, bareness, the whitewashed walls; through the window we could see the open field, broken almost immediately by a low stone fence—a scene which Van Gogh painted. Despite the beauty of the landscape, what an inhospitable, melancholy little cell for the confinement of genius! Outside, M. Thoret paused at the three gnarled olive trees in the abbey's orchard which were the subject of one of the most famous Van Gogh canvases. Olive trees are quite tortuously dramatic at all times; these, by virtue of their association with Van Gogh, seemed peculiarly impressive.

One item remained on the agenda with our French friend: the ancient town of Glanum through which he insisted on personally escorting us. He knew the director of the excavation and there would be no difficulty about our poking in the ruins. So we descended some five or six feet from the surface of the road and wandered about through the streets and houses, the swimming pools, baths and cloacae of this fantastically preserved provincial Roman city that served for us as a perfect preliminary for Herculaneum and Pompeii. A high dirt wall at one end marked the farthest point of the dig. Into this wall we thrust our hands—and felt Rome slide into our fingers. The shards, the pieces of pottery, and the fragments of building stone that emerged had been buried for many centuries; and for all we knew, ours were the first hands to touch them since the original residents of Glanum. The fever of history flared up in us for a bright instant, and archaeology—until now largely a word in a book—came to sudden life. We climbed back onto the road and bade farewell to our host. He urged us to send more Americans to him; he found them easier to talk to than Europeans and far more malleable; they were more eager about the world, and the only genuine optimists left. We said we would channel all Americans we knew in his direction and he could count on a steady stream of travelers from the New World. We laughed as we said this, and

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so did he. We shook hands, waved, climbed into the car, and set off for Aix.

Turning around at the last moment, we could see him already striding away across the fields, his white hair and beard bristling in the wind, easily the most vigorous figure we had met in a country so punished by modern history that its vigor was sealed up in a state of national suspension. Living inside the current of energy created by himself and flowing from himself, he was that rare contemporary figure, the man in whom the laws of free will still operated—an altogether remarkable phenomenon to be produced by a France which felt itself late in 1953 to be the victim of history, as until the great wars she had felt herself its master. No wonder Thoret was instinctively drawn to Mendès-France, who in 1954 was to give an astonished world another demonstration of individual operativeness, free will and power.

To the Italian Frontier . . .

The ride along the Maurès coast from Toulon to St. Raphael was an absolute orgy of cliff and sand, with a sea lounging ecstatically in a dazzle of endlessly changing blues and greens. Along this coastline, tiny jeweled towns hang eternally suspended in their own sensuous dreams: Cassis, Bandol, Le Lavendou, St. Maxime. We paused for lunch on the beach at Cassis. The sand here has a faint glaze of tan which takes the sting out of its usual blind whiteness; the water breaking on the beach has a chromatic purity which for a moment makes the eye a more intense, more delicate instrument; the sun, caught in the net of the slightly hazy air, cast a pale light over the French bread and cheese we were munching slowly and lent a deeper tone to the red Provençal wine we sipped. If these sea hamlets have any fault, it is their excessive tailoring. They are ordered, perfect, cut and trimmed, mannered to the last degree, wonderfully formal and curiously lacking in the human element. The slightly disheveled air of their Italian counterparts on the Ligurian coast is what one misses in them—they are perhaps the products of the artificializing element in French civilization carried a shade too far. Seeing them, one remembers the babies dressed in furs in the Parisian parks. The elegance of the babies has

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an absurd charm; the elegance of these Maurès towns is tonic to the senses, but without the warmth of spirit that suggests people living in them. As pearls on a coastal string at the beginning of December, their streets empty, their beaches clear, they exude a formalized sophistication, perfect of its kind.

January 1954

Rome . . .

The love of excess appears in every aspect of Italian life: in their cars, the new apartment houses, the language with its liquid and sensuous extravagance, even in their clothes. The Italian men wear sharply striped suits, beautifully cut and tailored, and eyesores. The women sport brightly colored coats, and the small children often appear in furs that come scarcely below their hips, leaving their bottom halves amusingly and grotesquely bare. The baroque tradition expresses itself also in the passionate concern of the Italians with their appearance. A seventy-dollar-a-month Italian civil service clerk with four children will outfit himself, his wife and the four *bambini* in clothes better suited to the income of a man ten times as rich. There will be only one outfit apiece, and this one must last for many years, and be cared for as though it were an indispensable asset, which indeed it is. When the fabric shows signs of wear, the seams are often ripped open and the coat, suit or dress turned inside out, remade and worn further. *La bella figura* is the great password; no respectable Italian, no matter how poor, would dream of putting in a public appearance unless garbed in his absolute best. Americans have a great reputation for outward display. But in this respect, they are not in the same class with the Italians.

The baroque spirit flares up again in the new apartment houses, which tend to be garish and grandiose. Their raw stucco, in flamboyant pinks and purples, is remarkably unattractive, the material so poor that it is already beginning to flake. The houses were thrown up with little regard to the terrain. They all have balconies, the Italians being constitutionally incapable of cutting themselves off from the open air. Contemporary Italian architecture, while full

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of brash individuality, seems to have little discipline and control. By an odd quirk, the gas stations come out better than the houses. This may be, in some obscure way, related to the motor-madness of Italy, evident not simply in the swarms of motor bikes, but in the fantastic number of different types and shapes of Italian automobiles. It is a common sight in Rome to run into a crowd gathered around some new model. The Fiat factory even put out a three-wheeled automobile with a plastic door opening in front; this item drew a particularly admiring audience. The ancient Romans, like the modern, were strong on transport too, but the modern Italians take to cars with a naïve enthusiasm that is one of the country's astonishing sights.

The restraint and control which the Italians bypass are evident in the extraordinary formalism of the French. The French make their demonstrations—their glorification of Napoleon and the war dead, their constant stress on *La Gloire* and *La Patrie*—but they do so within a disciplined framework that amounts almost to ritual. The Italians have much more "give" than the French. They haggle over money, but in an easy-mannered way. They display little overt feeling for their own phenomenal past. Few public issues arouse them now that Trieste has been settled, and they are good-naturedly cynical over the future of Europe. Their feelings are reserved for private life. Suicides are frequent in Italy, often among young men and women who kill themselves out of frustrated love. The French care a great deal about their past and are not reconciled to their military decline. Hence their bitterness and national egotism, which is why they are unpopular with most Americans and why the Italians are so contrastingly popular.

We recalled an anecdote told us by S. A. At rallies of the Italian Communist party, the Italians come dressed like well-to-do bourgeois. At rallies of the French Communist party, the French, logically drawing the conclusion that since they are supposed to be members of the exploited class, they had better look it, come dressed like tramps, often much more raggedly than their circumstances warrant. The differences among the Europeans are frequently as striking as the differences between them and the Americans.

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C. R. came to visit us one afternoon. He runs a column on literature and drama for one of the liberal Roman newspapers. He himself was born in a coastal town near Rome, left in the early thirties because Mussolini had reduced intellectual life in Italy to a stultifying emptiness and boredom, had lived for years in Paris, London and New York. An expatriate, he found Paris the most satisfying place, and had returned to Rome simply to discover whether he could find himself in the new Italy. But postwar Rome he found dull, and did not believe he would stay. We asked how he liked living in New York. It was all right, he replied, so long as he was busy working. But there was no place to walk in New York; it was all very ugly and monotonous and painfully lacking in greenery and nature—a fine city inside, but terrible outside. All in all, Paris was the best place; he would settle there permanently no doubt, but such is the emotional situation of the expatriate that even it would remain for him a city not quite his own. He is a complex, dry-mannered European intellectual, giving off little warmth, yielding instead an impression of cold detachment of a type not often seen in America.

He observed that the Italians are so easygoing because in modern times they have been outside the main current of European history, unlike France, which has been in it. Another reason is Nature, warm, beautiful, benevolent; the narrowness of the country puts the most inland Italian no more than 150 kilometers from the sea. Furthermore, the cities are small; even in Rome, one is never more than twenty minutes away from the open country. Then there is the role of the Catholic Church. Whatever one thinks about its ethical ideas and concept of eternal damnation, he went on, it relieves the Italians of many moral and metaphysical tensions; the priests do the *big* thinking, freeing the laymen from the need. Hence, it is easier for them than for other peoples to concentrate on living in the immediate moment.

February 1954

Naples . . .

Using Sorrento as a base of operations, we spent several days in Naples, driving back to Sorrento in the late evening. Naples is a

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city of great contrasts; great wealth and elegance and handsome streets together with wretched slums, swarms of beggars, many cripples, and great numbers of prostitutes who cluster around busy centers like the Umberto Gallery. Amid the squalor, the effect is one of an immense vitality, the vitality of the poor, perhaps induced in part by the beneficent climate and the overpowering natural beauty of Naples. The beggars are very knowledgeable and can distinguish infallibly between foreigners and natives. Their approach to other Italians seems perfunctory. But with tourists, especially American, they work hard at their profession, wheedling, arguing, trailing along, and growing truculent if they deem the handout insufficient. Europeans traveling on their own continent have a strict rule-of-thumb about alms and tips—which in both cases is extremely modest. Americans are less sophisticated. Either they are warned in advance about being "played for suckers," and so give nothing to beggars, or they are overgenerous, give far too much, and thus feed the traditional portrait of the American in Europe as an easy mark.

At the San Carlo Opera, which is across the street from the Umberto Gallery, we were struck by the blinding display of furs and jewels, which easily overshadowed anything at the Metropolitan. The rich in Italy are much richer than the rich in America. They pay no income tax and spend little on philanthropy. Their callousness to the poor, that is to say the great majority of their countrymen, is one of the shocking phenomena of Italian life and history. The same is true of France, Spain, Greece and Egypt, where the spread between the few rich and the many poor is fantastic, and there is no communication between the classes. The result is that in Italy the poor must take care of each other, inside the framework of *campanilismo*, "neighborhoodliness." By comparison, the social behavior of the American millionaire and corporation, in modern times at least, is incomparably more advanced in the scale of civilized values. Whatever their motives, they have given huge sums for charity, education, science, medicine and libraries. In this respect they make the Italians, in other ways so civilized, seem like medieval barbarians.

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The San Carlo is a handsome opera house in the baroque style, like most of the opera houses in Italy. Uniformed police, some in Napoleonic hats, stand at all the entrances, and in the San Carlo lobby there are also footmen with powdered wigs, red knee breeches, and braided coats. The ornamental soldier or policeman is a common sight in Italy. In Rome we noticed pairs of men dressed in Napoleonic garb marching about. When we asked the Romans what they were doing, the reply was, "Nothing." "Nothing?" we asked in surprise. "Nothing," was the reply again. They went on to explain that such soldiers had been on the streets of the city since Napoleonic times, and no one would dream of doing away with them. So great is the acceptance of the past that almost everything is preserved simply because it once happened. Utilitarianism has nothing to do with it. Moreover, the Napoleons lend a touch of color to everyday life, another of those aesthetic niceties with which the European countries are filled and which are so lamentably lacking in America.

March 1954

Rome to the Austrian Frontier . . .

The next morning we left Rome and angled northeastward across the narrow waist of Italy toward the Adriatic, stopping off en route at a remarkably beautiful hill town, not far from Perugia, named Spoleto. The streets of Spoleto are very medieval, the buildings very ancient, and crowning the town is the cathedral. One sees its lovely triangular façade at the end of a downward-sloping street which widens into a square. Inside, there is an old church and a new one. In the old, stored willy-nilly in rooms along the side, are a series of Byzantine Christs with almond eyes, flat, narrow faces with an oddly amused expression on them, and drooping black mustaches. Byzantine art, with its gold-painted background and semi-Oriental faces, is altogether remarkable, the Christs revealing once again how each age and country paints God in its own likeness. The new half of the Spoleto cathedral is lined with fine frescoes by Pinturicchio and Filippo Lippi; Filippo Lippi himself is buried in

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the right transept. On the surface, Spoleto seems like a thousand other hill towns in Italy, yet like them it has its own sensuous individuality and priceless treasures of art. Among the many paradoxes of Italy, the one that rises most vividly as one stands in the middle of Spoleto is this: here is a country that is land-poor, money-poor, job-poor, and yet serves as the repository, the safe-deposit box of most of the riches of Western culture.

In thinking of France and Italy, now that we were leaving these Mediterranean countries, we were impressed with a paradox that was to be reinforced elsewhere in Europe. Unlike the Americans, the French and Italians are acutely aware of the limitations of life, of what little possibility there is for the individual to change his status in society or in the world. Hence, they expect very little and waste little time in struggling to "get ahead." Since they feel that man's lot is essentially limited, their view of life is tragic, and they accept it with varying degrees of resignation, stoicism or cynicism. To the Americans, by contrast, life is full of unlimited possibilities; it is possible for any man, however humble or obscurely born, to become rich and acquire great status; through effort, energy and individual initiative, all things are attainable. The Americans are, therefore, optimistic rather than pessimistic, and life to them is not a tragedy, but an adventure. The paradox lies in the impact of these views on temperament. Inside his philosophical pessimism, the European tends to be cheerful, good-natured, easygoing, relaxed, displaying a capacity for living by the day, from moment to moment. Since there isn't very much he can do about anything, he lets himself go and enjoys what he can. Moreover, he is in no hurry. Hurrying is pointless if a man does not believe he is going anywhere. This is why business closes down from one to three hours a day all over Western Europe, why ninety million Frenchmen and Italians lounge in outdoor cafés for varying lengths of time, depending on the weather, and why, in the eyes of a visitor from the New World, the whole pace of daily existence seems to dawdle along. Inside his philosophical optimism, the American is nervous, anxious, worried, and driven by the desire to get ahead, and therefore spends his life in a frantic rush to go places, to keep up with the Joneses, to get

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his hands on money and rank. He has a roseate view of life, yet is not a happy man. He gets rich, but has little time to live. He is so obsessed with tomorrow that today goes by the boards. And the pace and rhythm of his daily life are much more attuned to a machine than a human being. He has achieved vast wealth, but this has not yet paid off for him in terms of serenity and happiness. Whether it will is, of course, one of the great, imminent, and as yet unanswered questions in American civilization.

A crossbreeding of the European view of the present and the American view of the future would come close to creating that wholeness in man so lacking in the contemporary world.

Pain is ever
with pleasure
a lever.
One alone
or the other
is never.

ALICE VAN HISE

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Respite

LENORE G. MARSHALL

Spring is your season. Where you are
You greet the newborn cherry tree,
Lids break to find the color of April air
Wakening like wild violet, white anemone.
Now all the peace you won, the infinite breast
Is not enough to hold you from this day,
And cosmic sleep from its own rest grants rest;
The God who gave you His eternity
Gives you again your orchard; here you wander
Through quickening bark, through branching blossoming skies,
Leaving the world of essence, and I ponder
What living is when with your loving eyes
You enter in the Eastertide, and rise.

✪ LENORE G. MARSHALL is the author of two novels, *Only the Fear* and *Hall of Mirrors,* and a book of poems, *No Boundary*. This poem will appear in her volume of poetry, *Other Knowledge,* to be published in October of this year.

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Return At Dusk

WILLIAM CROFT DICKINSON

"YES," I HEARD DRUMMOND SAYING WITH EMPHASIS, "for the rest of my life I shall endeavor to avoid looking into a mirror at twilight."

For a moment there was a dead silence in the Common Room. We were all gazing at Drummond with surprise. That our professor of anthropology should be afraid of looking into a mirror at twilight seemed too absurd to be believed. And I well remember my own confused medley of thoughts in which I found myself trying to reconcile Drummond (six feet two in his socks, broad in proportion, and of noted physical courage) with a mirror and some strange masculine version of the Lady of Shalott.

Drummond must have noticed the silence. He turned round, apologetically. "But it's true," he continued, in a quieter voice, and this time speaking to all of us. "A mirror at twilight worries me. I never know what I may see in it."

"Something to do with black magic and your African adventures?" asked MacEwen, peering over his spectacles with excited eyes, and hoping for another of the astonishing (but well-vouched-for) adventures which Drummond had experienced in his African field work.

"No," came the unexpected answer. "Something to do with history and with a place only about a hundred miles distant from this room."

MacEwen leaned back, disappointed. But the rest of us leaned forward.

"Out with it," ordered Forrester, bluntly. "You've said both too much and too little to escape saying more."

"Well, here it is then," answered Drummond, "though for rea-

✪ WILLIAM CROFT DICKINSON is professor of Scottish history and paleography at the University of Edinburgh. This story, reprinted from *The Sweet Singers* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), is a companion piece to "Can These Stones Speak?" which appeared in the Summer, 1955 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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sons which you will soon appreciate you must forgive me if I change the names of persons and places."

"As you know, I was in Africa when the war broke out. The news, when it reached me, was about a fortnight old, and I promptly trekked south to join the nearest regiment I could find. It seemed the simplest thing to do. But I might just as well have made for the coast and a boat home, for, within a week of becoming a private in the South African Rifles, I was suddenly summoned to Headquarters and there told to pack my traps forthwith. Apparently some anxious G.S.O. in the War Office had sent out a 'Search all Africa' order, with the rider that as soon as I had been found I was to be returned to London with all possible speed.

"Well, to cut a long story short, I was flown to Cairo and two days later I was reporting to that selfsame anxious G.S.O. in his own doubly guarded room in Whitehall. It was simply the old 1914-18 game once more. I was to take charge of one of the special sections devoted to counterespionage.

"But don't jump to conclusions. What I am going to tell you has nothing to do with enemy agents. All this is simply to explain how, for some six months in the winter of 1939-40, a small group of us came to be located in such an out-of-the-way place as Cairntoul Castle in Mar. We were sent there by the War Office, that's all. Probably the choosing of Cairntoul was part of some deep-laid plan—camouflage or what-not—I don't know. Certainly all the arrangements must have been made long before Hitler marched into Poland. The castle might be out-of-the-way, but, when we arrived there to take over, we found we were very much in touch with London and with the other sections doing similar work; and I need hardly say that our powerful transmitting and receiving set, with its aerial cunningly concealed in the old dovecot, was not installed overnight.

"In addition to our two wireless engineers, two batmen-clerks (working in that dual capacity), and one cook, there were eight of us in the section. But the unlucky number *thirteen* was avoided by the presence of Mrs. Lumsdaine, the old caretaker or retainer

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—probably an octogenarian—whom the War Office had taken over with the castle, though not, I expect, without full investigation into her character and into the characters of her forebears back to the ninth generation or more. The old lady was certainly sound enough, but whoever had had the task of taking over the castle must have found her a handful. Yet 'Mother Lum' (as we called her) kept pretty much out of our way. I could feel that she resented our intrusion into 'her' castle. To get more than two words out of her was like drawing water from a stone; but to get a cold, searching look whenever our ways met was as common as porridge for breakfast on a Highland croft.

"Actually, as I was to discover later, the old lady's attachment to Cairntoul was simply part of that old loyalty so characteristic of the Highlands. *We* were aliens, but *she* had been born into the service of the castle, just as her parents and their parents before them had been born into the same service and had served and died there. In earlier days, indeed, the castle must often have seen such loyal lifelong service, and, earlier still, service of a different kind when loyalty to the house probably meant dying in its defense, and dying long before the attainment of old age. The very stones emphasized that. The place was more than a castle, it was a 'strength.' Its massive structure was built in the shape of an L with the doorway in the re-entrant angle where it could be effectively defended from both wings. The old outer wooden gates had been replaced by modern ones, but the inner 'iron yett' was still there. I can tell you, I wouldn't have liked the task of breaking in, for, even when the iron yett had gone, there was what we should now call a 'baffle wall' which put the defenders in the shadow, darkened the whole entrance, and made it impossible for more than one man at a time to gain the staircase which wound upward immediately behind the wall. Again, the staircase itself was narrow—about thirty inches wide, I should say—and, being helical, was lit only at odd intervals, so that again the defenders could choose the shadows to contest its passage. And only by that staircase could one get into the castle at all. The stone stairs, worn with age, led directly to the first floor, to a corner of the 'Hall'—a long room, fully thirty-five feet long, and probably fifteen feet wide—with another staircase at its farther

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end leading down again to the ground floor and to the vaulted kitchens below that. In the chamber, in the shorter wing, adjoining the Hall, a newel staircase led to the second floor. Thus the main staircase had to be fought for and won, step by step, before the castle itself could be won. Altogether a thoroughly interesting old place, and one ideal for security, ancient or modern.

"The ground floor and the vaulted kitchens were wholly given over to the signalers, the two batmen-clerks, and the cook; though Mother Lum had kept her own room on the ground floor, in the wing. The big Hall was our general workroom (with an overflow into the adjoining chamber), and our sleeping quarters were upstairs on the second floor where, in the main wing, all the rooms led out of one another. In the shorter wing, however, there was one room only, larger than the rest, which had a second door leading outside to a kind of beacon-turret.

"That room in the wing, called the 'Turret Room,' was at first mine; and being one who likes to know what there may be behind doors, or where doors may lead to, I had opened the second door almost as soon as I had crossed the threshold of the room. But the turret outside was empty (save for a dead bird), and, being corbeled, it was clearly impossible for anyone to reach it from the ground below, whilst even if the impossible were achieved, an iron grille which completely enclosed the turret top would effectively prevent the climber from entering the turret and so gaining access to the room.

"All these ancient precautions, as I have said, were ideal for security; and, to remain inconspicuous, we had no sentry or armed guard of any kind. Nevertheless, our signalers had fixed an electric contact to the iron yett (which it was our practice to keep shut), and a whole battery of bells rang throughout the building whenever that gate was opened. In addition, a further press-bell was hidden in the darkness of the baffle wall and, on this, whenever any one of us had entered by the iron yett he gave a series of rings (the number being changed each day) so that the whole battery of bells again informed us that only one of our own number was entering our 'strength.'

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"For a month or so after our arrival at Cairntoul we were kept busy for a good sixteen hours out of every twenty-four. As a team we worked well together; and although nominally I was in charge, our work was essentially co-operative. I need not add that that first spell of intensive work was not without its reward.

"Then came two or three slightly less busy days, and for the first time I was able to arrange for each of us, singly, to get out on to the moors to stretch his legs, or, if he liked, to laze in the yielding heather.

"My own turn came last, and for a whole afternoon I lay deep in the heather, dozing, and drawing in physical and mental rest. Returning to Cairntoul in the gathering twilight, I passed a few words with the others, who were busy in the Hall, before climbing the further flight of stairs to my Turret Room. I was still in a happy mood of complete content, and, once in my room, I sat down on a chair, letting my mind absorb the quietness which seemed to be all around, bringing with it an air of peace so different from the work which we had just been doing and had still to do.

"I had sat down on the chair in front of the table which served as a dressing chest and over which an old mirror was hanging on the wall. Behind me was the door leading to the beacon-turret. Now what made me look up into the mirror, I cannot say. But look up I did, and, as I looked into the mirror I saw that the door to the turret was slowly opening. I watched that opening door like one fascinated, and, somehow, I could neither move nor cry out. Slowly the opening grew wider and wider. Then a face appeared, peering round the side of the door. In the mirror, the face seemed to look straight into mine, but in the twilight I could recognize no features —just the blur of a face: that, and no more. Then the face withdrew, and the door began slowly to close again, as slowly and as quietly as it had opened. It shut (though I could swear I heard no click of the latch), and, as soon as it had shut, the sense of powerlessness immediately left me. I felt suddenly and strangely released and, jumping up, I rushed toward the door. But, halfway, I stopped. Surely I had imagined it all. Probably my nerves had become too tightly stretched with that recent spell of intensive work. After all, one could dream by day as well as by night. Still, I'd bet-

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ter look into that beacon-turret, if only to satisfy myself. I took the few remaining steps, paused, and then quickly flung open the door. Nothing! This time not even a dead bird, for I had previously removed the one that had been there on my first arrival.

"Wisely, or unwisely, I said nothing about my 'visitor.' But exactly ten days later, when the whole incident was beginning to fade from my mind, I was rudely brought back to reality (or unreality), and again at twilight. Again I was sitting in front of my dressing chest, and this time I was certainly *not* dreaming. Actually I was brushing my hair before dinner, my mind alive and alert with the details of a pretty problem that had cropped up during the course of the day's work. And, in the midst of that simple operation of brushing my hair, my hands suddenly dropped. With a start, I had noticed in the mirror that the door to the beacon-turret was again opening, and opening as slowly and as quietly as it had opened before. Again an inquiring head peered round the side of the door. But this time it did not withdraw. The door opened wider and wider. The head was followed by a body. There was a quick movement, and my visitor had entered the room: and I remember noting that the door seemed to swing to and shut by itself.

"Now, don't ask me what my visitor looked like. I simply don't know. Partly the twilight was deepening into dusk, so that the light was poor; but mainly I seemed impelled to look only at the face which was reflected in my mirror. And that face, or perhaps I should say the eyes, held me as though I had been hypnotized. Never had I seen such concentrated hate before, and I hope I shall never see it again. As I have said, I seemed to be hypnotized, or, if you prefer it that way, I felt transfixed and powerless, just as I had felt before. Slowly, very slowly, almost as though I was to be taken by surprise, 'it' began to cross the intervening space, the eyes holding mine. That slow, deliberate closing-in was horrible. I was the victim of all the evil in the world which was now closing in for the kill. And I could do nothing. I felt a peculiar 'bristling' at the back of my neck—and I can assure you that 'hair-raising' is a phrase which is used too lightly and too often. It is not a pleasant sensation. Although I had been in many tight corners in my life, I think I may say that never before had I been terrified. But I was then. Unable

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to move, or even to cry out, my mind raced round and round the one question—What will it do when it reaches me? Probably everything took place in a matter of seconds, but to me the torment was protracted beyond the limits of endurance. Slowly that face approached behind me. Larger and larger in the mirror grew those awful eyes. Now I became convinced I could feel its breath upon me. A pair of hands seemed to reach out and close upon my neck. And . . . and all went black.

"I am told that when I was abominably late for dinner, one of the others came up from the Hall to remind me of the time. He knocked on the door of my room and, receiving no answer, looked in. Thereafter, for a brief space there was some bustle and confusion in Cairntoul. But, as it was, it simply transpired that for the first time in my life I had fallen to the floor in a dead faint.

"When at last they had brought me round I made some kind of feeble excuse—overwork or liver, or perhaps a combination of the two. I suppose I felt too ashamed to confess that I had fainted before a ghost. For, ponder over it as I could, no other explanation seemed possible. No alarm bell had rung; no one could reach that beacon-turret from the ground; and, above all, there was the iron grille. I remember spending that night sitting and dozing in front of the fire in the Hall, unwilling to return to my room. By morning I had ashamedly come to the conclusion that I couldn't face that room again.

"As good luck would have it, however, that very morning brought the possibility of change. Just before lunch a coded message came through calling away one of my team on an urgent, but fortunately lengthy, task in Holland. It was a bit of a rush to get his papers ready and to get him to Aberdeen in time for the London express. But it took my mind from my visitor; also, and more important so far as I was concerned, it freed a room. Taking one of the batmen-clerks with me I moved all my possessions into that providentially provided spare room—all my possessions but two. In my old room I left two heavy filing cases, and those, with the batman's help, I dragged across the floor to barricade the door leading to the beacon-turret. If my visitor wasn't a ghost, and if someone knew a way of gaining access to the turret, then in the future he

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would certainly find it impossible to enter Cairntoul itself without making a noise more than sufficient to warn all those on duty in the Hall. Perhaps I was still unwilling to admit that I had been terrified by a ghost. But, and again it was my pride, the moving of the cases enabled me to say that I was changing my room only because of the appalling draught that came from the turret door, and that those two filing cases would alleviate the draught for anyone who might have to use the room again.

"What my team really thought, or guessed, I don't know. But a chance meeting with Mother Lum a few days later seemed to reveal that Cairntoul had some 'history' not unconnected with the Turret Room. Answering my 'Good morning' with an 'Aye, it's no bad the day,' followed by a keen look from her gray eyes, the old body paused as though about to say more. That was unusual, and I waited expectantly. Then apparently she changed her mind, and with the tantalizing remark, 'I'm hearing Black Dougal will be back then,' she went on her way. Who 'Black Dougal' was, she left to my imagination, and I knew it would be useless to question her. Doubtless she regarded Black Dougal as her own—like Cairntoul itself —and, if he were a ghost, then she was unwilling to share her ghost with other intruders who were of the solid flesh. Not unnaturally I connected him with my visitor; and, from the way Mother Lum had spoken, I gathered that to the initiated he was by no means unknown.

"For a week or two nothing disturbed the even tenor of our way. Then, unexpectedly, came a message from the War Office to say that a Mr. Mowat was on his way to fill the vacancy in my team. And at once the problem arose—Where should we sleep him? If I were to suggest his sharing a room with one of the others when my old room stood empty, then perforce I would have to tell my tale. In the end I decided to stick to the old excuse: the Turret Room was a poor room, frightfully draughty, with a 'howl' from the outside grille whenever the wind blew in a certain direction, and so forth and so on. But I had reckoned without our new recruit. When he arrived, alert and confident, nothing I could say would persuade him to 'double-up' with one of the others. There was an empty

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room. He had slept in far worse places than a room with a draught and a howl. He was insistent. I was halting. And, in the presence of the others, pride still kept me from the truth.

"Mowat went up to the empty room, while I made a mental reservation that I would tell him of my visitor as soon as I could get him alone. But although, later, I was to see him alone more than once, by then my own story had paled before his experience.

"He had arrived late in the afternoon, and again it was twilight. Stupidly, I had been so intent on persuading him not to take over the Turret Room that I had failed to connect both *time* and *place*. And only when there came a strangled cry from above, followed by a terrific crash and then a further crash, did I curse myself for forgetting that upon both occasions my visitor had come with the dusk.

"We raced to the stair and to the room. Bursting open the door, we found Mowat lying on the floor in front of the table, almost exactly as I had been found in my 'faint.' He was lying on his back, with his arms spread-eagled; but it was his face that caused us to cry out. Even in the dim light we could see that it was suffused with blood, while his eyes seemed to be sightlessly staring at us with a look in which agony and terror were horribly combined.

"Sanderson, who had taken a medical degree, and who was our 'doctor,' was quickly on his knees and moving professional hands over that still body. Feeling suddenly sick, I turned away, only to trip over a large file of papers, and then over a second file. Surprised, I looked round. The two heavy filing cases with which I had blocked the door to the beacon-turret had been flung aside as if they had been empty cardboard boxes. One had fallen one way, one the other; the drawers had fallen open, and their contents were strewn about the floor. But the door to the beacon-turret was shut.

"Mowat, mercifully, was not dead, and that same night we got him into a nursing home at Aberdeen. But it was a full three months before he was out again, when, upon my own urgent recommendation, he was posted to Southampton and given the task of coping with the many problems raised by officers coming on leave or returning overseas. I had to think of some post where he would be kept too busy to remember Cairntoul; and the R.T.O.'s office

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at Southampton had always seemed to me to be about the busiest of its kind.

"But I am going much too fast. Long before Mowat was out of the nursing home it had become one of my major tasks to try to induce him to tell his tale. It was clear that if only he could unburden himself, his recovery, and particularly his recovery in mind, would not be long delayed. But the terror had bitten deep, and I daren't tell my own tale first, lest, instead of encouraging him, I should only increase the torture of his mind. At long last, however, I induced him to speak, and the tale, when it came, was much the same as mine. There was this difference, however—Mowat, terrified and powerless (even as I had felt powerless), had seen the face in the mirror; he had seen it slowly draw nearer (the hate in its eyes seeming to burn into his soul); he had felt the hands at his throat; and then, suddenly, those hands had tightened into a grip, powerful, relentless and *strangling*. With that he thought he gave a cry before unconsciousness intervened. 'But what was "it"?' he asked me. 'And how did "it" get in?'

"I noticed his use of the word 'it.' So he also had doubted the nature of his visitor. But the only answer I could give him was to tell him of my own experience, to ask him to forgive me for allowing him to use the room, and, above all, to assure him that he had finished with Cairntoul for good.

"After that unburdening, Mowat recovered quickly, and, as I have said, he was posted direct to Southampton, far removed from the Province of Mar. Meantime, at the castle, we sedulously avoided the room, but also we took one positive action. We smashed that mirror to fragments and, having carefully collected the fragments, we threw them into an enormous fire, specially built-up for the occasion, where we watched them melt and fuse. Later we collected the shapeless glass nodules and, with the ashes, scattered them to the winds of heaven. Later still, I had one further brief passage with Mother Lum, but her pronouncement, far from being helpful, only increased the mystery.

"I had come back from visiting Mowat in Aberdeen. Meeting her outside the iron yett, I said cheerfully, 'Well, Mr. Mowat seems to be progressing famously now.'

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" 'Mowat, did ye say?' she cried with a wild look in her eyes. 'A Mowat is it? May heaven save him!' And with that she hobbled away.

" 'Heaven has,' I muttered, somewhat irreverently, as I cast innumerable though silent maledictions on her retreating figure.

"And that, as you can see, took me no further.

"Then, early in June, 1940, the War Office suddenly decided to disband my team. We left Cairntoul and, in the urgency of new tasks, the mystery of Black Dougal and the Turret Room gradually lost its hold and became a bad memory and little more.

"With the end of Hitler and the surrender of Japan, I returned here to the humdrum labors of my anthropology department; and yet it was here, in the academic peace of the University, that I learned what had previously been denied.

"I had been back perhaps a week or ten days when Henderson, of the history department, asked me if I would give a lecture to his 'mediaeval' students. Naturally I agreed, and, during the course of the conversation, I happened to mention that I had been stationed for a while at Cairntoul in Mar.

" 'Did you see the ghost of Black Dougal?' he asked.

"I pride myself that I didn't start.

" 'Why?' I said. 'Is the castle haunted?'

" 'It's supposed to be,' he answered, cautiously, 'and with one of the best authenticated ghosts we have. There's quite a story behind it.'

"And, to conclude, the story I got from Henderson was roughly this:

"Some time early in the sixteenth century, when the Mowats, who then held Cairntoul, and the local branch of the Camerons had been long at feud, an attempt was made to end the feud by a Mowat-Cameron marriage. So Mowat of Cairntoul married the daughter of Cameron, but, after a week or so, when the Camerons had gone home, Mowat brutally strangled his wife and then sent defiance to the Camerons.

"I should add that Mowat was supposed to be mad, but naturally the Camerons were paying no attention to that. They turned

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out to a man, and Cairntoul being what I have already described to you, they were wiped out to a man, and narry a footing did they get on that staircase. Wiped out to a man, yes; but there was a young brother to the murdered bride—a boy, Dougal, then about six years old. And upon Dougal fell the whole burden of a new and a more bitter feud. As he grew up, the boy, and then the man, nursed his revenge—and so came the name 'Black Dougal,' from the hate that burned in his eyes.

"But there was little chance for Black Dougal in the Mowat country, unless he went there by night; and by night the mad Mowat sat and laughed in the Turret Room where he had strangled his bride. Yet mightn't that give Black Dougal his chance? One night, in the gathering dusk, and the manner of it no one knows, Dougal made that impossible climb up the castle wall, right up to the beacon-turret, only to be beaten at the end by the overhang of the turret's corbeling. Struggling to breast the corbeling he fell—a sheer forty feet at least—and was killed outright.

"At that, Mad Mowat only laughed the louder. But, within a week, he had caused an iron grille to be made to enclose the open turret at its top. Within another week, he was found dead in the room—strangled, as there he had strangled his bride."

"Why then should the ghost of Black Dougal still haunt Cairntoul?" asked one of us.

"Who can answer for a ghost?" was Drummond's reply.

"Yet a Mowat in the same room would be sure to bring him back," put in another, wisely.

"Perhaps," concluded Drummond. "That sounds a possible interpretation if you believe in ghosts."

He paused for a moment. "Do *I* believe in ghosts?" he continued. "I can't tell you. But I can assure you that never again will I look into a mirror at twilight. Yet have you wondered why a ghost should need to fling aside two heavy filing cases in order to leave a room? That point is puzzling. I thought ghosts could pass through such material objects with ease.

"Moreover there is one further detail which I omitted to men-

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tion and which makes it all more puzzling still. I'm convinced that no one could climb that outer wall to the beacon-turret. Yet one of our signalers, an honest, sober and thoroughly unimaginative fellow, had other views.

"It appears that about the time when we were rushing upstairs, after hearing Mowat's strangled cry and the crashes above, this signaler was walking back to the castle after making some adjustment to the aerial in the old dovecot. Happening to look up to the turret, he was astounded to see a man hanging there by his hands. Then, to his horror, the man dropped like a stone.

"For a second our signaler stood still. Then he ran forward as fast as he could. But, to his astonishment, the climber, who should have been killed outright, picked himself up, ran round the corner of the castle, and out into the open country beyond.

"With a shout (which, of course, in our own preoccupation we didn't hear) the signaler went in pursuit. Doggedly, in the gathering darkness, he followed his man. Before long, he could see him only against the light in the sky. The man came to a small hill, breasted it, stood silhouetted for a moment on the top, and then disappeared down the other side. In turn our signaler breasted the hill but, when he came to the top, his quarry was nowhere to be seen.

"Admittedly it was dark; and admittedly a man might easily take cover in a fold of the ground. *But later I was to discover that the Cameron country started on the far side of that hill.*"

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Stand Still, True Poet

. . . as true as truth's simplicity, And simpler than the infancy of truth.

WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

The symposium on "What's Wrong with the American Novel?" in the Autumn number of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR was extremely interesting, but inevitably inconclusive. On such an occasion many trial balloons are sent up, and some which ought to be pricked with a pin remain to clutter up the sky. But perhaps it is not too late. Among the several individual judgments with which I disagree I should like to select one for examination. The opinion expressed seems to me wrong in itself, which is bad, but also dangerous in its implications.

In pursuit of answers to the general question of why great novels have not been written in the last decade, Mr. Ralph Ellison found a partial solution in the complexity of modern life. In his own case, he said in effect, he knew firsthand only two small segments of America, the South in which he grew up and the Northern metropolis to which he had emigrated. Before he could write the great American novel he needed to acquaint himself with all America. Some of his fellow panelists, agreeing at least in part, adduced other complicating factors in our life and thought which put the writer on the defensive or even silenced him: particularly the rapid advance of knowledge and opinion—relativity and nuclear fission, Freudian and post-Freudian psychology, cultural anthropology, statistical sociology, nationalism, internationalism, house lots on the moon. (This bill of particulars is partly mine, but it is precisely the sort of thing they were thinking of.)

I have found among critics of modern poetry—and among the poets—this same defensive conception: the sterilizing effect of the complexity of modern life, modern society, modern thought upon the art of letters. The great poets and dramatists of the past, it is said, wrote in a simple, fully oriented society, in a room, so to say, with closed walls. The universe of Dante had no vague edges; that of Milton, if different in details, rested on an identical assumption. If the writing of the Victorians seems to us hollow—I do not say it does to me—it is because they endeavor to impose the old myths upon a world which after Darwin *et al.* no longer believed them. And in our century, they assert, no new synthesis, no new myth, has been evolved. The shrill irony of *The Waste Land,* the sterner nihilism of the Existentialists, will not serve as the new affirmation. Besides, the simple things have all been said.

Now this is all very interesting. The trouble is that it is not true. Some particular truths have been brought into the service of a general falsehood—or, more mildly, a fundamental misapprehension of the character of art and artist, and the relation of the artist to the observable phenomena of this our life. It is true, of course, that many of the details introduced into modern novels, poems and plays would not have appeared in work prior to this century. *Gods of the Lightning* was not possible be-

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WILLIAM T. HASTINGS, professor of English emeritus at Brown University, is the author of books and articles on English literature. As president of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, Mr. Hastings serves as the consulting editor of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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fore the ideological-sociological conflict which led to what many consider the judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. The surprising resemblance of a small boy to his mother's first husband would not have been emphasized before the modern pseudoscientific notion was aired that thinking of *A* while in the embrace of *B* might affect the fruit of the womb. May Sinclair could not have written some of her *Uncanny Stories*—she is mathematician as well as novelist—before the reading public had some grasp of the concept of space-time. O'Neill could not have restated the Oedipus myth in superficially modern terms without recourse to a textbook of psychiatry. Before the death of the proprieties Norman Mailer could have drawn soldiers dead, but not obscenely naked in word and deed.

Now all this has to do with the superficies of life or a particular position chosen by the artist for doing his portrait. The essential point in reply to the argument of complexity was stated in the symposium by Miss Jean Stafford: "I don't see that the problem for the novelist today in America is any different from that of a novelist in any point in history." And later she adds: "I don't have any sense of separation from the audience. When I'm writing, I'm writing for God—"

To say this should be enough. But you will pardon me if I elaborate the issue with some examples. Perhaps the most striking instance of the effort to include the whole of contemporary society in a great synthesis is the *U.S.A.* of John Dos Passos. A brilliant effort, with its employment of techniques borrowed from radio, screen, newspaper, *Who's Who*, and night club, it fails as a work of art as well as in comprehensiveness and unity of meaning in spite of running to what was originally three volumes. It was influential but remains unreadable. The only comparable efforts I can think of are, on the one hand, the sesquipedalian historical epics in prose, which pile volume upon volume tediously, or the effort at a similar unity by superimposing generation upon generation in one's narrative, as notably in the Oxford, Mississippi, sagas of Mr. Faulkner. And these, the epical historical novel and the "mind of God" simultaneities of Faulkner, exclude far more than they include, in no case provide the supposedly desirable synthesis.

What sort of an agreement about life and death, the destiny of man, or what you will, do these theorists about the shortcomings of modern literature have in mind? Must each author accept the same formula? And must that formula—that "myth," as our friends love to say—be generally familiar to and accepted by readers and audiences of the day? Let us look at some cases.

Though not all the books of the Old Testament were written at one time, I think we may assume the kind of common body of knowledge and opinion in its original "audiences," the absence of which today is proposed as a handicap to the serious novelist. But where is the evidence of a shared or agreed-upon synthesis? So wide is the disparity in the views of man's life and goals in various parts of it that audience influence or control would seem to have been negligible, and certainly not primarily responsible for the greatness of the individual utterance. Consider the assumptions behind the story of Jael and Sisera, on the one hand, and the Twenty-third Psalm; or the Ninety-first Psalm, on the one hand, and the disciplining of Job on the other (a thing I have resented from my youth); or the contrasting values in The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.

Chaucer was a great poet, writing in the fourteenth century. Did that century have a universally accepted set of values, a myth? Was it a simple society? What about Lollardry and the Villeins Revolt? Was the spreading of Wyclif's ashes on a tributary of the Avon universally acclaimed? Who chanted: "When Adam dalf and Eve span, Who was then a gentilman?"

Chaucer, no doubt, had a personal "adjustment." But under what pressure of agreement with or submission to public judgment did he satirize the monk, the friar, the pardoner, and make the dainty prioress tell a story of ritual murder, or, contrarily, show a bias toward the Oxford

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clerk, the knight, the yeoman, the franklin —and certainly not condemn the wife of Bath?

Marlowe, in the sixteenth century, anticipates Hitler and the SS in *Tamburlaine,* is anti-Semitic in *The Jew of Malta,* features a king's male darling in *Edward II,* and in *Faustus* draws a damned soul whose fall is objectified by the medieval parade of deadly sins and devils, but who is received into a hell akin to that conceived in the *No Exit* of Jean-Paul Sartre. Where is the synthesis, the shared belief, here? or as between Marlowe complete (if you can define his "myth") and such other men of the age as Latimer, Spenser, Jonson, Burton, Browne? These were all good—or great—writers. How many wrote primarily to please? were "conditioned" by their public? were great because of a shared synthesis? stepped to the tune of the time and owed their success to it? Shall we not rather blame or praise their *daimon*?

I brush by Shakespeare, certainly not by nature a "controversial" figure, certainly an Elizabethan; but within the pattern of conformity to the Tudor political dogma—which no doubt he accepted with few reservations—how varied his representations of humanity, how multiple (I had almost said "complex") the simplicities of the mind and heart of man. Tolstoy repudiated Shakespeare because he was not a sociologist, and Bernard Shaw pretended (in "Better than Shakespeare?") to belittle him because he had no ideas, only words. Fortunately he had words, but also ideas, not Tolstoy's or Shaw's but the familiar ideas which we may guess have been forever the possession of mankind. At any rate, neither he alone, nor he in conjunction with his chief contemporaries, can provide us with a formula, a myth, a synthesis or *Summa,* which we can label "Elizabethan" and see as the magic source or inspiration of the power which made them great.

Finally, let us return to our own day and to American prose fiction. *Great* is a foolish word; but it is not difficult to find persons writing in this century who have done excellent work in spite of the supposed paralyzing complexity of the age. In the field of the novel I need mention only Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* and *The Age of Innocence,* Ellen Glasgow's *Barren Ground,* Willa Cather's *My Antonia,* Marquand's *The Late George Apley,* Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury.* In the short story, among several skillful writers, I mention only Mary E. Wilkins, the flawless artist of "A Village Singer" and "A New England Nun." You will notice in each case mentioned—and they were not selected with that in mind—the use of a very specific and necessarily restricted milieu: the New England wintry countryside of *Ethan Frome,* the Old Bostonian atmosphere of *George Apley,* the Deep South of Faulkner—each authentic, redolent of its particular provincialism. And out of each emerges some act, gesture, or word which is true not only of the place and time but of human nature—strikingly in the last words of the village singer, the retired soprano of the little white church choir, who fought back at the church, the minister, and Alma Way, her successor, and who, when Alma came to call on her in her last illness, forgivingly invited her to sing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," but completed her surrender with a remark typical of her slightly acidulous Yankeeness, "You flatted a little on 'soul.' "

No, the complexity of our age is not the reason for the shortage of great writers. The great writer of the future need not, any more than the great writers of the past, take up within himself the whole panorama of our age—New York from Battery to Bronx, the dusty Plains, the shadowed South, that fabulous West Coast; tycoon, college professor, strip teaser, honey-tongued radio announcer, Bible Belt exhorter, child wonder, moronic killer, Calvin, Herbert, Franklin, Harry, Ike, and Adlai. The sprightly English novelist, Miss E. H. Young, sums it up very nicely:

> Celia's was a narrow world, but what more was the greater world than a container of personalities and the pain and happiness they could bestow on their fellows? Here, in little, were most of the emotions, preoccupations and du-

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ties common to mankind—love, dislike, anxiety and doubt and the perpetual problem of right and wrong, the need to earn bread and eat it, to flavour it with humour and a little malice, to be temperate and forbearing, to keep the peace if it could be kept with honour.

What is needed is not a new synthesis, a new myth. It is individual vision, as Mr. Haydn rightly said in the symposium. Add to it, for our purposes, storytelling faculty, command of atmosphere, and style. With these gifts the old and simple things are never trite; for triteness is merely the consequence of self-distrust, insincerity or uncreativeness; it is truth spoken by the untruthful, observations recorded by the unobservant, banners of deep feeling awkwardly unveiling a shallow soul. With individual vision there is no need to muffle up life in myth, to project reality in symbols. Great writers are born and not made —not self-made by pulling up on one's aesthetic bootstraps, or attending writers' conferences or laboratories. Great writers come; they go. All we can do is watch, and perhaps pray, that when the great talent reveals itself, we will bid it welcome.

The softer the batter,
the less the matter
to stuff the soul
for an hereafter.

ALICE VAN HISE

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

It wouldn't be quite true to say that "some of my best friends are hunters." Still, I do number among my respected acquaintances some who not only kill for the sake of killing but count it among their keenest pleasures. And I can think of no better illustration of the fact that men may be separated at some point by a fathomless abyss yet share elsewhere much common ground. To me, it is inconceivable that anyone can think an animal more interesting dead than alive. I can also easily prove, to my own satisfaction, that killing "for sport" is the perfect type of that pure evil for which metaphysicians have sometimes sought.

Most wicked deeds are done because the doer proposes some good for himself. The liar lies to gain some end; the swindler and the thief want things which, if honestly got, might be good in themselves. Even the murderer is usually removing some impediment to normal desires. Though all of these are selfish or unscrupulous, their deeds are not gratuitously evil. But the killer for sport seems to have no such excusable motive. He seems merely to prefer death to life, darkness to light. He seems to get nothing other than the satisfaction of saying: "Something which wanted to live is dead. Because I can bring terror and agony, I assure myself that I have power. Because of me there is that much less vitality, consciousness and perhaps joy in the universe. I am the spirit that denies." When a man wantonly destroys one of the works of man, we call him "Vandal." When he wantonly destroys one of the works of God, we call him "Sportsman."

The hunter-for-food may be as wicked and as misguided as vegetarians sometimes say, but he does not kill for the sake of killing. The ranchers and the farmer who exterminate all living things not immediately profitable to them may sometimes be working against their own best interests; but whether they are or are not, they hope to achieve some supposed good by the exterminations. If to do evil, not in the hope of gain but for evil's sake, involves the deepest guilt by which man can be stained, then killing for killing's sake is a terrifying phenomenon and as strong a proof as we could have of that "reality of evil" with which present-day theologians are again concerned.

Despite all this, I know that sportsmen are not necessarily monsters. Even if the logic of my position is unassailable, the fact remains that men are not logical creatures, that most, if not all, are blind to much they might be expected to see, and that the blind spots vary from person to person. To say, as we all do, "Any man who would do *A* would do *B*" is to state a proposition mercifully proved false almost as often as it is stated. The murderer is not necessarily a liar, any more than the liar is necessarily a murderer. Many have been known to say that they considered adultery worse than homicide, but not all adulterers are potential murderers and there are even murderers to whom incontinence would be unthinkable. The sportsman may exhibit any of the virtues—including compassion and respect for life—everywhere except in connection with his "sporting" activities. It may even be too often true that, as "anti-sentimentalists" are fond of pointing out, those who are tenderest toward animals are not necessarily the most philanthropic. They, no less than sportsmen, are not always consistent.

Yet, if the Puritans really did forbid bearbaiting, not because it gave pain to the bears but because it gave pleasure to the spectators, they were not necessarily so absurd as Macaulay has made us believe. That particular pleasure *was* evil in itself, and to this day the Puritan logic is also that of the Roman Catholic position (based on St. Thomas): namely, that cruelty to animals is

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wrong, not because animals have any rights, but because cruelty corrupts men. And I am so sure this is true that I am offended when President Eisenhower tells reporters that on his vacation he hopes to find time "to shoot a few crows." I have no doubt that crows have to be kept down. But I have strong doubt that killing them ought to be a pleasure.

If anyone asks me why we shouldn't get a little fun out of a necessary activity, I will reply: "For the same reason that legal hangings are no longer made a public spectacle. The fallacy is precisely that of the Mikado, whose sublime object it was to 'make each prisoner pent / Unwillingly represent / A source of innocent merriment / Of innocent merriment.' "

In the spring of 1955, a magazine called *Sports Illustrated* distributed a questionnaire intended to determine the public attitude toward hunting. One answer received from a woman in Tampa read: "I am not the sloppy, sentimental type that thinks it's terrible to shoot birds or animals. What else are they good for?" The *New Yorker*, which reprinted her reply, answered: "Bulls can be baited by fierce dogs, and horses sometimes pay money."

Two other quotations culled from recent magazines are even more instructive because they come from more sophisticated people. The first is copied from *Time*, which ran an article about how duck hunters near Utah's Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge [*sic*] "could hardly shoot fast enough to bring down the ducks," heading the article with a quotation from Hemingway's "Fathers and Sons." "When you have shot one bird flying you have shot all birds flying, they are all different and they fly different ways but the sensation is the same and the last one is as good as the first." The other quotation is again from the *New Yorker*, which reported without comment part of an interview with Sir Pierson Dixon, the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. "I like this shooting thing, stalking some relatively large animal or, even more enjoyable, shooting birds. It's like the pleasure of hitting a ball."

The difference between the two attitudes is interesting. To Hemingway, the realization that you are killing something that is alive seems to be the essence of the pleasure. Sir Pierson, on the other hand, is neither looking for madder music and stronger wine nor, like the lady from Tampa, attempting to struggle with the theological question of what animals are "for." His is simply that uncomprehending innocence sometimes said to be most frequently met with in the English gentleman to whom it has never occurred that the creatures he pursues are alive at all—as his phrase "like the pleasure of hitting a ball" reveals. Birds are merely livelier, less predictable clay pigeons. And it is in exactly the same light that those of his class have sometimes regarded the lesser breeds without the law or even the nearly inanimate members of all social classes below them.

Albert Schweitzer, with his "reverence for life," represents the attitude furthest removed from this, and he has been made quite a hero. But for all that and for all the fact that ruthlessness and cruelty are more often frowned upon now than at most periods of the world's history, it is not easy to be sure in what direction we are now tending. In fact, there is no prettier example of what the Marxists call the inner contradictions of capitalist culture.

When Thoreau allowed himself to be persuaded to send a turtle as a specimen to the zoologists at Harvard, he felt that he had had "a murderer's experience in a degree" and that however his specimen might serve science, his relation to nature would be the worse for what he had done. "I pray," he wrote in his journal, "that I may walk more innocently and serenely through nature. No reasoning whatsoever reconciles me to this act."

On the other hand, although professional students of living things are somewhat more likely to feel strongly a "reverence for life" than the average man, they are only *somewhat* more likely to do so. One of the most distinguished contemporary ornithologists told me that he saw nothing in the slightest degree incompatible between his interest in birds and his delight in sport.

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Audubon slaughtered birds in wholesale lots so large that he once remarked that birds must be very scarce when he did not shoot more than a hundred in a day. Many present-day students find no reason too trivial to "collect" an animal or a bird, although their consistent use of the weasel word may suggest a defensive attitude. And I have often wondered that sportsmen who find themselves subject to many restrictions have not more often protested as unfair the "collector's licenses" rather freely granted and sometimes permitting the holder to shoot almost anything, almost anywhere, and at any time.

Teddy Roosevelt, himself a mighty hunter, was more responsible than any other one man for the establishment of the finest system of national parks in the world. At the moment they are more seriously threatened than at any other moment in their history, but I shall not go into that. But I do want to note a fact relevant to the whole question of "reverence for life," namely the near disappearance from the liberal arts curriculum of natural history as a cultural subject. From the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, some familarity with plants, animals and birds was one of the recognized elements in "The Education of a Gentleman." Now, except in isolated and more or less accidental cases, even the biological courses, which have replaced the natural history American colleges used to offer, are intended for and taken only by students headed toward medicine or some scientific specialty. They are likely to begin with the dissection of the earthworm or cockroach and then go on to the dissection of the cat. But they rarely have anything to offer the student of, say, literature, who might like to know something about what the nature poets he does study seemed so strangely concerned with.

Not long ago I spent a week on the campus of one of the older colleges of the Eastern Seaboard which prides itself upon being a liberal arts college and nothing else. Adjoining the campus is a fine stretch of woodland presented by an alumnus and planted with a beautiful array of native and exotic flowering shrubs and trees. When no student or faculty member I had met could tell me the name of one of the most striking, I sought out the one and only member of the botany department. He smiled condescendingly. "I," he said, "am a cytologist. Doubt if I know a dozen plants by sight." Now cytology is a very important subject. But are the secrets of the cell as essential a part of a liberal education as some nodding acquaintance with plants and animals? Perhaps it was this very college which produced the immortal student of romantic and Victorian literature who thought the "pimpernel dozing by the lea" was some sort of furry quadruped taking a nap.

"Nature Study" is now usually relegated to the kindergarten or the elementary grades, and even there it is tending to become more and more a laboratory science. I myself have seen a "progressive" school where the pupils were being introduced to nature through the old dismal process of worm dissection, probably because that was all the instructor had been trained in. And that is by no means an extreme case. A leading biological supply house boasts of the wide increase in the use of "nutrition experiments" (grandly so called) in schools, and it offers eight different deficient diets conveniently packaged, as well as the animals whose malnutrition when fed any one of these diets may be observed by the curious. Very recently the head of the National Cancer Institute has urged high-school teachers to teach their pupils how to produce cancer in mice by the transplantation of tumors and in chicks by the injection of enzymes.

Is it sentimental to ask whether anyone not preparing for the serious study of anatomy is likely to be any the better for the dissecting of a cat or whether anyone, no matter what career he is preparing for, is any the better for having starved a rat or induced cancer in a mouse? However completely experiments up to and including vivisection may justify themselves when there is actually something to be learned from them, is there any possible excuse for repeating them merely by way of a spectacle?

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Forget, if you like, the rights of the mouse —if any. Think only of the attitudes developed in the human child. In his cradle, we read to him of Peter Rabbit. We "assign" Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Thoreau in college. But what is the use of asking him to explicate "He prayeth best who loveth best,/ All things both great and small" if his only contact with either the great or the small is going to be a demonstration that what Shylock said about Jews is true of animals also—if you prick them they bleed and if you poison them they die.

Past experience has taught me that the only reaction of at least half those who read, or read at, this disquisition will be a simple "So what?" "Ours," they will say, "is the age of Man, Machines and Useful Knowledge. We are no longer part of nature either physically or emotionally. To the relatively slight degree that we are still dependent upon natural products, we have learned how to manage their production with maximum efficiency and there is no reason why we should let nature take her course about anything. Animals other than domestic and game are good for nothing except for what we can learn by dissecting or by experimenting upon them. All this fuss about Saving the Parks is merely a sentimental plea for wasting ground that could be grazed and lumber that could be cut. Millions today rarely see anything except concrete and steel and don't know what to make of anything else if they do happen to see it. Their proportionate numbers are bound to increase. Cities are healthier and more convenient anyway, and any regret over man's increasing self-sufficiency is merely what a certain well-known Columbia University professor used to call 'nostalgia for a lower form of civilization.'

"As for literature and the other arts—if you still insist that they are somehow important—it is already being shown how well they can get along without what you call nature. Why shouldn't a painter paint factories and machines, which most people are familiar with, instead of the trees and beasts that most people are not? Literature has a wide enough field in sociology, psychology, and that purely human nature which is our chief concern. What does a pimpernel dozing by a lea have to do with modern man? As a matter of fact, I'm pretty vague myself as to what it is. And I don't feel any the worse for my ignorance."

If all this is the truth and the whole truth, then obviously there is nothing more for me to say. If it isn't, then I still think the proposal I once made to offer "Humanities 313—Nature Study for English majors" at Columbia was a good one. It may even be that Saving the National Parks will have to begin by getting natural history again accepted as part of "The Education of a Gentleman."

One of the resolutions I made when I undertook to conduct this department was to keep what unsympathetic friends call "the birds and the bees" out of it. The other resolutions I shall mention one by one when I break them—as I am about to break Resolution Number Two, which was not to return to any topic previously discussed. Here, then, is a supplement to a previous consideration of the "improved techniques of communication."

An Arizona friend, who lives in a community less citified than Tucson, tells me that on a recent visit to New York her taxi driver inquired whether or not they had television "out where you come from." "No," she replied, "I am glad to say we don't." Whereupon the driver turned full around to remark: "Lady, I agree with you. That way you get illiterate fast."

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..... The Revolving Bookstand .....

Spirit of an Age

STORY OF A YEAR: 1848. By Raymond Postgate. Illustrated. *New York: Oxford University Press. 288 pp. $4.50.*

Reviewed by PRISCILLA ROBERTSON

History (when not fictionalized) is almost always written with a moral, whether it be of the importance of economic or cultural factors, or simply the moral of the historian's own devotion to objectivity. Very rarely is it written as pure entertainment. Yet, why should we not be as entertained by our ancestors' quaint doings as by those of African tribes or our own ex-urbanite neighbors? All the social sciences have recently come alive with so much colorful information that they are by way of making the most popular form of light reading.

In view of this trend we should not be surprised that Raymond Postgate, whose reputation as a "moral" historian rests securely in other books, opens his *Story of a Year: 1848* with the declaration, "This is not a book with a purpose." It provides, however, most urbane entertainment.

The idea of the book is simply to show what an average citizen of 1848 might think of the world as he lived through the months of that year, without any foreknowledge of what would come later, without any more thoughtful consideration of what was going on than most average citizens give to the affairs of 1956. Mr. Postgate does not actually describe his "observer," but from the kind of things the observer notices it is permissible to deduce that he was a British subject, since he suffered panic during a minor Chartist demonstration although he watched the bloody revolutions in France with superior detachment. His view of America, of course, was an outdated mixture of the ideal and the absurd. He must have been an indefatigable newspaper and magazine reader, a subscriber to the *Illustrated London News* (from whose sheets he got his idea of style) and to *Punch* (from which he took his sense of humor). If one accepts the definition of well-roundedness as the ability to read all the columns of a newspaper with equal interest, this observer qualified. His concerns embraced politics, art, fashion, travel, invention, medical theory, "communism"—and scandal. His thinking could be as profound as a *Times* editorial or as irresponsible as the latest gossip. In short, his mind reflected the moods of the time without reflecting deeply upon them. And although the average citizen had no prescience of anything that was to come out of the year 1848, Mr. Postgate slyly manages to create in him an unusually subtle flair for noticing those details which will in one way or another seem piquant to his prototype of a century later.

How much, then, of the famous part of 1848, the year of revolutions and the California Gold Rush, comes through? The chapters proceed by months, January, February, and so on. Take February. The bulk of that month is occupied by the trial of Captain Denman, who had pursued the work of Her Majesty's Navy against the slave trade with almost more than legal enthusiasm. The slave trade discussion takes twice as many pages as the overthrow of King Louis Philippe in France. December shows up as the month when Louis Napoleon was elected President of the Second Republic in France, while Americans began their mad dash to the West Coast. All these are "important" concerns, but they are sandwiched in between discussions of the whiskeriness of British males, the claims of various patent medicines, and an analysis of the Christmas dinners which were served both to the rich

✪ PRISCILLA ROBERTSON is the author of *Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* and editor of *The Humanist*. Recently she was awarded a grant for literature by the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

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and to the inmates of poorhouses. The spirit of this history makes all details equally significant and equally lively.

In other words, this delightful book is pure comedy—not satire, not farce. Thus the revolutions are portrayed with a sense of haste and surprise and haphazardness which is as appropriate as any treatment. Indeed, the preposterous quality of the revolutionary passions, and of the gold-digging passions too, comes out more truly in these pages than in many more serious and agitated studies. Comedy is one of the authentic ways of interpreting life. This is especially true for a period so unusually rich in self-deception as the mid-nineteenth century. In the light of comedy, it is perfectly natural that the cook of the Reform Club in London, Alexis Soyer, who displayed original genius in the invention of new dishes and an effective social conscience by using the fortune thus acquired to set up soup kitchens in the poorest section of the city, should come out more of a hero than Lamartine or Mazzini or General Zachary Taylor.

The text is adorned with cuts taken from the two magazines mentioned and with full-page reproductions of various works of art which enhance the feeling for the spirit of the age.

The Indian Scene

AMRITA. By R. Prawer Jhabvala. *New York: W. W. Norton. 283 pp. $3.50.*
MANO MAJRA. By Khushwant Singh. *New York: Grove Press. 181 pp. $1.25.*

Reviewed by SAUNDERS REDDING

Leaving aside the facts that *Amrita* and *Mano Majra* have their scenes in India and are the works of Indian writers, there is but one indisputable point on which the books bear comparison: they examine the same problem. When all devotions are threatened in the swelling tide of change, what loyalties endure? In both these novels —one excellent, one interesting—the problem does a double service. It suggests the basic dilemma of people caught in a situation not of their own making—thus creating the drama; and it invites philosophic speculation—thus involving the reader's intellect. But it must not be thought that either Mrs. Jhabvala's or Mr. Singh's book is a "problem" novel in any other than the usual loose dramatic sense. Neither is a thesis novel. Beyond the considerations stemming from the one point of comparison, all else intrinsic to *Amrita* and *Mano Majra* stands in contrast.

Amrita is a novel of manners. The principal characters are Amrita Chakravarty, an Indian girl of good family but somewhat uncertain upbringing, and Hari Sahni, a youth of different caste, questionable family, and strict upbringing. The distinctions are important, and Mrs. Jhabvala poises and counterpoises them against a total background of social change with brilliant effect. Contrary to all the rules of caste, class, and community, Amrita is in love with Hari, and she is faced with the problem of dissolving the objections to their match. It is not easy. In fact, she never does, for the dead weight of tradition—social, religious and economic—is too much for even her romantic idealism and brimming energies. But her predicament, instead of developing its tragic potential, creates situations crammed with delightful comedy.

Because Amrita is in love with Hari she must also be in revolt against the ancient, caste-ridden world of India, represented in her mother's smothering solicitude, her Aunt Mira's submission to a shadowy husband's whims, and her grandfather's patriarchal authority. Yet, if she surrenders her allegiances to their familiar world, what would be left? There is, of course, the world of the West, represented in Uncle Vazir Dayal who, after years of wandering in Europe, has nothing to do "except cultivate his personality," and the Cavalier tearoom, where the men have learned to stare at women, and the band to play "a potpourri

✪ SAUNDERS REDDING, a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, is professor of English at Hampton Institute. He is the author of several books, including *An American in India.*

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of Westernized tunes." Grandfather Bahadur announces, "We will send Amrita to England next March," but Amrita does not want to go to England. She wants only Hari.

And Hari? He wants only peace from the complications of love. "Being in love of course was wonderful," he reflects. "It was what he had always thought of all through adolescence, what all the films he had seen and all the songs he had heard and all the conversations he had held with his friends had taught him to expect of himself. But he had not thought it would be so complicated."

But if Amrita's problem is vexed by Hari's utter childishness, it is comically dramatized by the activities and the foibles of half a dozen fascinating characters. There is Prema, Hari's eldest sister, who is forever discovering that she is "just like the woman in the story . . . 'she sits in the middle of all this expensive furniture, carpets, silver, many servants, but her heart is breaking inside. O how sad, how sad,' she sobbed, 'and how true.'" There is Vaidya, whose line is, "All imitation. We are a nation of imitators." And there are Lady Ram Prashad, who does not wish to expose her social manner to any more strain; and Mohini, groaning with morning sickness; and Suri, well fed, self-assured, and very Western in a silk sport shirt and a gold wrist watch.

For all its delights, the novel has one fault: the principal characters are completely known too quickly. After the first five chapters, neither Amrita nor Hari hold any mysteries. Still, one is not sure that this is a fault in a comic novel of manners. But if it is, in spite of it, *Amrita* is a delectable dish, made piquant with just a dash of curry.

Although he uses the same ingredients—loyalties misprized, honor dared and duty tested—Mr. Singh cooks up an altogether different dish. It is a brew of brimstone, blood and nitric acid served piping hot. Caught in the very moment of change, his characters are stripped and peeled like raw edibles and put to simmer on the fire of revolt.

Mano Majra is an Indian village where Sikhs and Muslims and a few Hindus have lived together in peace for a hundred years. The Hindus are shopkeepers, the Sikhs are landowning farmers, and the Muslims ("We have lived amongst you as brothers," one of them says) tenants. Loyalty to the village is stronger than loyalty to the gods; and although traditions are alive, they sleep. The mullah mutters his morning prayers; the guru singsongs his, and the sadhu does not pray at all, except to appease Siva the Destroyer when the river floods. In this tranquil atmosphere, Jugga, a Sikh dacoit on probation, could love, unmolested, Nooro, a Muslim girl. When he learned that her womb carried his child, he could savor without misgivings the thought of marrying her.

It was August, 1947, the year of the partition. Ten million people were in flight, but Mano Majra, "an oasis of peace . . . lost in the remote reaches of the frontier," had not stirred. Nor did it stir until the night Sikh dacoits from another village came and killed the moneylender, from which followed an investigation by the deputy police commissioner. Hukam Chand, a conscientious officer, wanted no communal blood shed in Mano Majra. In an effort to prevent this, he ordered the arrest of two men: Jugga, the Sikh, known as a "budmash," and Iqbal, a stranger who had just arrived and who was thought to be a Muslim. Perhaps, Chand reasoned, this Iqbal had come to foment trouble between Muslim and Sikh. The situation could be serious. And shortly it was, for by his actions the deputy commissioner "divided Mano Majra into two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter."

It is just at this point that the novel breaks down as art and builds up as sensation, and all that follows has the inconsequential quality of ghoulish nightmare. A train pulls into the station of Mano Majra late at night. It is packed with Sikhs and Hindus, all quite dead, murdered by the Muslims. The next day the rains come and the river floods. The "turbid water carried carts with the bloated carcasses of bulls still yoked to them. Horses rolled from side to side as if they were scratching their backs.

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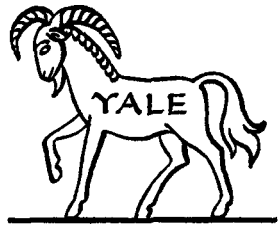

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There were also men and women with their clothes clinging to their bodies; little children sleeping on their bellies with their arms clutching the water and their tiny buttocks dipping in and out. The sky was soon full of kites and vultures. They flew down and landed on the floating corpses. . . . 'They were not drowned,' " a man cries out. " 'They were murdered!' " Everything is different in Mano Majra now. Loyalties waver and collapse. " 'Only befriend the Turk when all other communities are dead.' "

To undo the damage—though it is not clear how—the police commissioner releases Jugga from jail, and Jugga immediately behaves in the way the hero in a C-grade movie does. The train, bearing the Muslims evacuated from Mano Majra by order of the commissioner, is due to pass through the village. On that train is Nooro, and the Sikhs have murder in their hearts. Jugga loves Nooro, Muslim or not. That train must be saved. Jugga saves it.

It seems quite obvious that Mr. Singh tried to strike a compromise between a full-bodied story of character under tragic stress and a story packed with meaningful dramatic action. The result is at least a partial failure, because between these two there can be no compromise: the meaning of action reposes in character. In *Mano Majra*, excepting minor instances, character is lacking, and what we have is melodrama. As melodrama it absorbs one's interest.

Humanity in Art

DIARIES AND LETTERS OF KAETHE KOLLWITZ. Edited by her son Hans. *Chicago: Henry Regnery Co. 200 pp. 48 plates. $7.50.*

Reviewed by EDGAR LEVY

Kaethe Kollwitz' drawings, graphic works and sculptures have not been as widely appreciated in this country as they were in pre-Hitler Germany, and since her death in 1945 this situation has seemed less rather than more likely to be changed. The publication of a selection from her diaries and letters, together with two autobiographical sketches, a memoir by her son, and a moving account of her last days by her granddaughter, should be an important factor in influencing Americans to view her work with more interest.

For they suggest that her reputation in Germany was founded at least partially on the knowledge of who and what she was. We have been largely deprived of that knowledge. These documents, therefore, are accessory to the understanding of her art, and taken with it form a body of work that rates its creator among the foremost of German artists.

"How is it," she asks in a letter written in 1915, "that for years, many years, the same theme was always being repeated in my work? The premonition of sacrifice."

It was the falling in battle of her younger son, Peter, in the early months of the First World War that occasioned her question. How this crushing blow was transmuted into the fiber and spirit of her work is the main content of this book. Few people are so acutely tuned to pain as was Kaethe Kollwitz. Far fewer have been able to construct monuments for mankind out of their private sorrows.

Within a month of her son's death she resolved to design a sculpture in his memory—an "offering"—and this became her most urgent task. Her writings are full of her ardent pursuit of form adequate to her expression. Viewed in this light, all her other work appears to be preparation and testing for this principal undertaking. It was not until eighteen years later, in 1932, that her project was completed and she installed her two eloquent figures—mother and father—in the military cemetery in Flanders where her son lies.

The intervening years were occupied with the long agonies and briefer joys of creation. Out of them her courage asserted itself over

✪ EDGAR LEVY describes himself as "a member of that very well-known company, the little-known artists." For some years he has been studying, painting, exhibiting, and teaching in New York City and vicinity. Mr. Levy has published a series of articles on modern painting in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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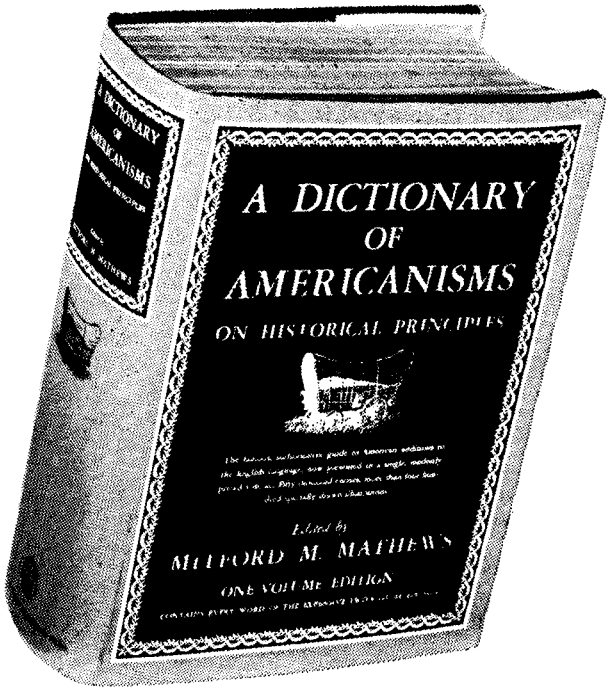

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all the troubles to which Germany was subject. Her public as well as her personal accomplishments rose above every consideration less than that of humanity. Near the end of her life, in the midst of the Second World War, deprived by the Nazis of her honors and her right to exhibit, her eldest grandson—Peter's namesake—killed on the Russian front, she learned that her Berlin home had been destroyed by bombs. She was able to write, "But there is also some good in the total annihilation of the past. Only an idea remains and that is fixed in the heart."

Her attitude toward war, changing from suspicion to outright opposition, gives the sense of her development. She grew up in a revolutionary, religious atmosphere conditioned by the German Free Congregation and by her grandfather, Julius Rupp, its prime mover. From this childhood she cultivated strong inclinations toward socialism and pacifism—inclinations she set aside in 1914 under the influence of the young people's enthusiasm for Germany's cause. But two years later she records in her diary that she read an essay on liberalism and finds her position on the war untenable and contradictory. In October, 1918, the Berlin newspapers published her reply to the appeal of a contemporary poet for a last ditch stand. She said, "There has been enough of dying! Let not another man fall! Against Richard Dehmel I ask that the words of an even greater poet be remembered: 'Seed for the planting must not be ground!' "

The quotation from Goethe is an appropriate leitmotiv for her life and work. Mothers protecting their children was her most insistent theme. In 1920 she designed a poster with the motto "Vienna is dying! Save its children!" In 1942, in Hitler's Germany, she wrote in a letter, ". . . today I have finished my lithograph, 'Seed for the planting must not be ground.' This time the seed for the planting—sixteen-year-old boys—are all around the mother, looking out from under her coat and wanting to break loose. But the old mother who is holding them together says, 'No! You stay here! . . . when you are grown up you must get ready for life, not for war again.' "

In one of her last letters she wrote, "Every war is answered by a new war, until everything, everything is smashed. The devil only knows what the world, what Germany will look like then. That is why I am wholeheartedly for a radical end to this madness and why my only hope is in a world socialism. You know what my conception of that is and what I consider the only possible prerequisites for it. Pacifism simply is not a matter of calm looking on; it is hard, hard work."

Yet, she was not a political person. She did not participate in political programs, had no party ties, followed no political leader. In a diary entry she writes, "And so I also have the right to portray the working class's farewell to Liebknecht, and even to dedicate it to the workers, without following Liebknecht politically."

And, speaking of her reputation for being a "socialist" artist, she says, ". . . my real motive for choosing my subjects almost exclusively from the life of the workers was that only such subjects gave me . . . what I felt to be beautiful."

What invested these subjects with beauty was her inheritance of Christian ethics and her greatness of heart. What brought her to do "socialist" subjects was neither intellectual conviction, nor class interest, nor a rebellious temperament. They were the proper focus of a spirit that was as profoundly religious as it was human.

Perhaps this is why her work seems a trifle old-fashioned to modern eyes. Perhaps this is why she showed so little interest in the artistic storm that raged in Paris (and in Germany, too) during the most active days of her career.

In 1922 she wrote in her diary about attending a memorial meeting for the war dead, ". . . when I know I am working with an international society opposed to war I am filled with a warm sense of contentment. I know of course that I do not achieve pure art in the sense of Schmidt-Rotluff's, for example. But still it is art."

At a time when we are having rather more of "pure" art than we bargained for, we can do with a Kollwitz. Some present-day critics will disapprove of an art that

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encompasses so many elements—anecdotal, illustrative, even sentimental—unrelated to the formalistic values that make up so large a portion of the new painting and sculpture. These writings strongly urge that the critics are mistaken. For art to be expressive it must be about something, and about something human. Purity and impurity are trivial concerns in the climate of Giotto, of Grunewald, of the late Rembrandt, of the Picasso of the Guernica mural. It would be unjust to join Kaethe Kollwitz to so rare a company. But if one takes the documents assembled in this book along with her artistic production one may know how modest she was when, speaking of understanding between the artist and the people, she wrote, "Genius can probably run ahead and seek out new ways. But the good artists who follow after genius—and I count myself among these—have to restore the lost connection once more."

In Tragic Life

THE HEARTH AND THE STRANGENESS. By N. Martin Kramer. *New York: Macmillan Company. 402 pp. $4.50.*

Reviewed by HENRY W. WENNING

"*The Hearth and the Strangeness* is a violent work and contains specific acts of murder, insanity, suicide and homosexual love—as well as other examples of unconventional behavior." This is a fair representation of the tenor of Mr. Kramer's first notices. If any injustice has been committed by way of extravagant condensation, it is purely poetic.

I do not mean that this engrossing novel has been either damned by neglect or received with universal hostility. On the contrary, it is my impression that it has received a fair amount of attention, and it seems likely that the actual mix will probably turn up about as many "favorables" as "unfavorables." What is baffling, however, is the concert in which both friends and foes have joined in placing a false face of sensationalism on this first work by an unusually fine and self-exacting writer. The consensus has, I believe, demonstrated an unusual preoccupation with the violence that often and not unreasonably attends the consummation of human tragedy, with a corresponding lack of emphasis on this particular tragedy and the compassion and great craft that went into its making.

The book is not without fault or flaw, and at more than one point the author leaves the reader in some confusion as to his exact intentions. However, to give the impression that Mr. Kramer's novel is little more than a bag full of sensational episodes not only misrepresents a work of commanding stature, but indicates a lack of understanding with respect to the difference between tragic literature and that characterless fiction which depends for its effect upon contrived tumult and the reader's zest for vicarious excitement. Mr. Kramer's work has dimensions that will not fit into this second category, and to present it as if it did is much like saying that *Medea* is a play about a woman who murdered her own children.

Circumstance, of whatever kind, is a lesser ingredient of true tragedy. It is character, for example, that lies at the core of Euripides' drama of the Colchian sorceress: the betrayal of her king and father, the treachery of Jason, and Medea's barbaric killings are truly effective because they emerge so clearly from the characters of the "abhorred blood-red mother" and her opportunistic lover. In this respect this contemporary novel may be compared without incongruity with the ancient play; in tragic life, as our living author portrays it, it is character which spins the plot, and the disintegration of the Grange family is brought about by the action of circumstance on what is false within.

The Hearth and the Strangeness covers some fifty years in the life of an unusual but by no means unrepresentative family of the American middle class. The pivotal character in this history is Sumner Grange, a psychologically maimed runaway from the dark household of his sadistic father. It is

✪ HENRY W. WENNING is a New York businessman.

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Sumner's fate to escape from a mad and perverted tyranny only to reproduce in his own children the last and most pitiable victims of the Grange tragedy. His life is measured out in alternate periods of enthusiasm and depression; a man who has some talent for meeting the difficulties of life with scorn and belligerence, but whose greatest desire under any troubling circumstance is to dissociate and withdraw. The life of such a man is likely to be a continuum of mistakes, but Sumner's greatest folly arises from his hope that, by a single act of the will, all stains can be washed away and his fear and emptiness allayed through conjunction with a stronger personality. Thus he enters into marriage with a woman for whom he feels no affinity or affection, but whose "strength of character," he persuades himself to believe, will strengthen and stabilize his own erratic personality. However, Lisette Rhone, behind her façade of grim determination, is almost as weak and helpless as Sumner himself. She brings to this misalliance a spirit that is in total and obdurate opposition to her husband's. No bridge is possible between these inarticulate and unmatched human beings; mired in misunderstanding, and each of them characteristically unable to help such a one as the other, these two descend gradually into an abyss of disappointment, mockery, and savage dislike.

The tragedy with which the novel is ultimately concerned now appears as companion to the three children who are born into the undermining atmosphere of this house without a head, without strength, and, in time, without any constancy or love except that the children themselves supply. Because the disintegration of the parents is a gradual and cumulative matter, the oldest child is relatively the most fortunate. Corinne, the first-born, is also the first to leave, a fact which enables her to achieve at least a half life of peace and compromise. The younger children, however—the gentle, overexcitable Gareth and his adoring, too loving sister, Aliciane—find in the end that there is no escape, and it is around them that death and darkness close as the book ends.

Mr. Kramer has given his characters a definiteness and reality that establish the validity of their actions beyond any legitimate complaint. For the purpose of developing his story he utilizes what has been referred to as "the unusual technique of piecing together the lives of his principals by shuttling backward and forward in time." Whether or not the technique is unusual, it is certain that the author uses it with great authority to illuminate his characters in their last detail and to heighten immeasurably the drama of his story.

Mr. Kramer's talent at characterization and structure is matched by a straightforward style that prevents his incipiently lurid material from ever getting out of hand. It should not be concluded from this that the writing contained in this book can be defined as ordinary or adequate. For example, Aliciane's "Journal of the Spring Semester" is a dazzling tour de force, written with brilliance and presenting a portrait of adolescence which may have been equalled, but certainly has not been surpassed by any contemporary writer.

The Hearth and the Strangeness is a major work of fiction by a writer who must likewise be given majority status.

Accepting a Verbal Chess Game

HERBERT MARCUSE

Dr. Abram Kardiner couches his review of my book, *Eros and Civilization*, [AS: Spring, 1956] in terms of scientific method: to him, my mode of thinking is not only incapable of arriving at knowledge, but also "damaging" and "irresponsible" because it moves "with such recklessness beyond the confines of tangible evidence." There are certainly several opinions as to what constitutes knowledge and truth. Nobody would seriously quarrel with Kardiner's insistence on "testable propositions"; the problem

✪ HERBERT MARCUSE is a professor of politics at Brandeis University and author of the recently published *Eros and Civilization*. This is his comment on Dr. Abram Kardiner's AMERICAN SCHOLAR review of that book.

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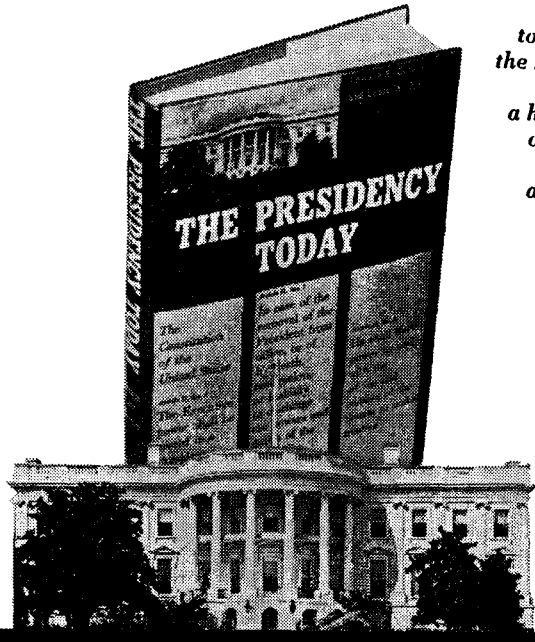

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arises only with the question: Testable how and by what criteria? To confine testability to "tangible evidence," i.e., ultimately to facts as data of sense perception, is to prejudice the issue by ignoring the great discussion on the differences between social and natural sciences, which is one of the major intellectual efforts of the last hundred years. Then one need not bother about the critical function of social and historical theory. Indeed, one need not bother about most of philosophy. In blissful self-righteousness one can discard reflections beyond tangible evidence by denouncing them as "metaphysics," "verbal chess games," "semantic atrocities," et cetera. One need not ask whether the method which may be the only scientific one in the natural sciences is also obligatory for the sciences of man and society; whether here the formation of *concepts* (which, in my mode of thinking, are still indispensable instruments for the advancement of knowledge) must not necessarily go beyond the confines of *tangible* evidence. These sciences work with theoretical hypotheses concerning demonstrable alternatives for human action and existence open to man in the prevailing conditions. Trends and tendencies, the projection of given facts, their interpretation in the light of historical possibilities—in other words, concern with that which is not yet fact but may become fact through human action has always been a legitimate effort of these sciences. The effort may be inadequate, or it may be unscientific in Kardiner's sense, but it may still be less irresponsible than its defamation. In my book I had something to say about the social usefulness of such defamation; I do not wish to repeat myself, but I should like to correct some of the misrepresentations of my views contained in Kardiner's review:

(1) Insofar as social theory is concerned with *historical* (as distinguished from abstract-logical) possibilities, it is surely committed to verification: it must have an "empirical basis." The possibilities claimed must be derived from existing facts, and their theoretical projection must be related to "identifiable" trends and countertrends. I may have failed to do so, but I have nowhere affirmed (as Kardiner maintains) "immunity from responsibility to fact," nor have I expressed the belief that one can arrive at the truth "by sheer logic" without empirical basis. The empirical basis for my reflections is described in my book as the contemporary transformation of industrial society.

(2) I have nowhere said or implied that society is an "organism" and that "adaptation" is the "unfolding of an entelechy in which instinct is the prime mover." On the contrary, I have conceived of society as the historical development of a system of domination and division of labor, and of "adaptation" as the methodical modification of the instincts in which *reason* plays an essential role.

(3) I have nowhere said or implied that "the solution" (Dr. Kardiner probably means progress toward nonrepressive civilization) "cannot take place by elevating the standard of living because the latter justifies surplus-repression." I did say that surplus-repression is necessitated and justified by specific forms of domination, and that these forms of domination vitiate the rise in the standard of living.

(4) I did not place "the control of society in forces over which man cannot hope to exert any influence." On the contrary, I tried to identify the historical conditions under which man can influence the social development in the direction of a higher stage of freedom and reason. Therefore, the "effect" of my thesis cannot be to "encourage irresponsibility and hopelessness"—unless one misreads my thesis and distorts its content into the opposite.

(5) Kardiner maintains that the concepts of Freud's later theory (on which my book is largely based) "were invented . . . for the purpose of solving purely clinical problems." Perhaps they were, but since when does the purpose for which a concept was "invented" decide the scope of its application? Are Freud's concepts confined to "purely clinical problems" in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents, Moses and Monotheism*? In their transcendence of the tangible clinical evidence, they

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belong to the great tradition of social theory whose hypotheses open new vistas into the depth dimension of society and into its basic historical trends. If this is a verbal chess game, I am proud to play it in such company.

While these misrepresentations may be misunderstandings due to my poor "style of thinking," I cannot place the same interpretation on the merely personal attacks in Kardiner's review. He writes: "In an epilogue, Marcuse savagely attacks all the neo-Freudian revisionists—*at least those he happens to know about*" [my italics]. My style of thinking must indeed be very different from Kardiner's, for I would not conclude from the selection of certain psychologists for discussion that they are those the author "happens to know about." I would at least be aware of the possibility that the omission of others (among them Kardiner) may have been motivated by different reasons. Kardiner's proposition was easily testable. He concludes his review, however, with an untestable proposition: "To trust thinkers like Marcuse is surely to fiddle while Rome burns." I have the weakness to believe that the ideas which I tried to convey may perhaps contribute a little to the prevention of such a fire. But if Rome really burns, it might be less damaging to play the fiddle than to deny that it burns.

Brief Comments

AMERICAN PARADOX: The Conflict of Thought and Action. By Merle Curti. *Rutgers. $2.75.*

This book is substantially the three Brown and Haley Lectures delivered by Professor Curti in 1955 at the College of Puget Sound. The author first gives attention to the great respect for learning in early America and indicates the numerous ways in which it was utilized in the building of the nation's political, economic, and social institutions. The American experience, he observes, has done much to prove the validity of Francis Bacon's assertion that knowledge is power. "No country has so impressive a record as the United States in applying knowledge for increasing the comfort and well-being of the whole people," he asserts.

Despite the many uses to which knowledge has been put, the gap between theory and practice, between the scholar and layman, has not been closed. In a notable essay, "Revolt Against Reason," Professor Curti describes the rise of anti-intellectualism in the United States and seeks to explain its persistence and, in recent years, its revitalization. The spirit of business enterprise, the equalitarianism of the democratic movement, and the challenge of totalitarianism must share the responsibility.

Anti-intellectualism in the United States has become so serious in recent years that it has created a crisis in the relations between thought and action. In his final lecture Professor Curti calls for a re-examination and, possibly, a redirection of our educational system. In the century of the common man, all people must have the kind of education that will make it possible for them to take realistic and constructive action to solve the problems they face. "Only when American society discovers and recognizes all skills and talents as socially useful and important, and only when it capitalizes these for the common good, will the antagonism between thought and action, between intellectuals and the rest of the people, finally diminish." The book is a call to action to all Americans to preserve the nation's intellectual vitality, one of its precious resources.

JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN

EDUCATION AND THE SUPREME COURT. By Clark Spurlock. *Illinois. $3.75.*

The dramatic decision of the Supreme Court in the recent cases on segregation has focused the attention of the country on this tribunal and the role it has played in shaping American educational institutions. Inasmuch as the Constitution is silent on this matter, the educational issue is always indirectly considered by the Court as it determines rights asserted under the Constitution. From the Dartmouth College Case in 1819

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until the Segregation Cases in 1954, the Court has pronounced upon such divergent questions as the sanctity of a state-granted charter, separation of church and state, compulsory flag salute, teacher tenure, and loyalty oaths. The Court has generally approached these questions with great reluctance to interfere in what is considered primarily a function of the states.

Although the subject is of wide current interest, many readers may find the lengthy quotations from court opinions, which constitute the greater part of the text, formidable. As a reference work, it readily identifies all cases dealing with educational institutions, both public and private. However, it is difficult to grasp the constitutional developments in so many fields from only the forty-five cases directly affecting education.

HELEN W. NIES

THE MORAL DECISION: Right and Wrong in the Light of American Law. By Edmond Cahn. *Indiana.* $5.00.

This book is a thoughtful exploration of a large area of ethics. It significantly interprets for both lawyer and layman the interrelation of law and morals in America. Carefully selecting cases which pose moral problems in such matters as the conduct of business among individuals and with the government, sexual relationships, and the family, Mr. Cahn clearly summarizes the decisions of the courts and then elaborates on the moral principles which underlie them. A decision of the Minnesota Supreme Court which characterized the acts of a banker who had set up a competing barbershop for the purpose of driving the town barber out of business as a "brutal 'application of force'" affords Mr. Cahn a starting point for a discussion of the responsibilities of wealth. In a discussion of a deportation proceeding before the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, he uses to good effect the decision that defrauding the government of taxes is a crime involving moral turpitude to show that the law does not share the view of many individuals that fraud is any the less fraud because it is practiced against a large, impersonal entity. Most of the decisions selected by Mr.

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Cahn illustrate the fact that, contrary to popular belief, the law does not merely set the lower permissible limit of behavior.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this book is Mr. Cahn's case-by-case approach to moral problems. It points up the fact that, as in the law where each case is decided on its facts, an individual, though guided by general moral precepts, must responsibly make his own moral decisions in the light of the specific circumstances of his problems.

JOHN A. GRAY

SURPRISED BY JOY. By C. S. Lewis. *Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.*

The path from childhood to maturity is not infrequently marked by religious doubts and denials. For most people this phase is merely a passive floating in the tidewater of faith and a safe return to port. For some, such as James Joyce, it is one of life's paramount emotional upheavals, never quite absorbed. Few men could describe the journey from Christianity to Atheism and the return to Christianity purely in terms of reason. C. S. Lewis comes very close to doing this in his autobiography, published, I hope, merely as a prelude to further autobiographical musings.

In his early years, Mr. Lewis was compelled to search for Joy as the keystone to life. The fact that Joy was, and is, a perpetual condition of hope rather than "having," makes it too elusive to grasp, makes delusions and images of Joy all too convincing as substitutes. For the author, seeking Joy is actually a process of elimination.

Religious introspection has been handled badly by writers so often that it is pleasant to find the tone of this volume maintained without sentimentality, dogmatism or masochism.

The book has flaws. Mr. Lewis labors over his childhood in a charming but repetitious fashion, only to race over description of his later schooling, particularly the interesting Oxford period when his conversion took form, with a haste of events rude to the thoughts he is conveying. Though he explains this in his introduction, the omissions are puzzling. Nevertheless, *Surprised by Joy* is such an eminently sensible book that it merits the attention of Mr. Lewis' old admirers and of new readers unacquainted with the work of the Cambridge scholar.

JANE HALE SEBOLD

MAN AND ENERGY. By A. R. Ubbelohde. *George Braziller. $5.00.*

This provocative philosophical analysis by a professor of chemistry, dean of the faculty of science at Queen's University, Belfast, seems to this reviewer to be only two-thirds complete. In the first section, the author presents a chronological, semi-popular story of the growth of power—first, the conquest of animate energy from about 4000 B.C. to 1700 A.D., then the coming of mechanical power, followed by electrical distribution of energy and, finally, the splitting of the atom with its profound implications for the future of mankind. This section of the book apparently is based, in part, on B.B.C. lectures and is entertaining and informative.

The second part of the volume develops the author's philosophy of the growth of knowledge. He associates this section of his book with his specialized interpretation of the laws of thermodynamics and seeks to relate these laws of the conservation of energy to the growth of knowledge. Like many an engineer and scientist who seeks to find scientific measuring rods for the intangibles and imponderables of the effects of science on our civilization, Professor Ubbelohde has produced a thesis which is unsatisfying. It is to be hoped that the author will find the time to expand, enlarge and point up in a third section the human implications of whether man will in the end control energy or whether energy will overwhelm man. In the author's "Tektopia," shall we all be kings or vassals of science?

FREDERICK M. FEIKER

PROSPERITY BEYOND TOMORROW. By Samuel H. Ordway, Jr. *Ronald. $3.00.*

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ointment is thick, and the only fly in it is that it will only last another sixty years or so because America and the world are consuming more and more.

Mr. Ordway's contention is that the world is living on its capital and not on the increment of its renewable natural resources. As population increases and technical know-how makes more consumer goods easier to get, the world's goose is being killed for its golden eggs.

The leisure that more and more people will have in the decades to come offers the hope that men will develop an awareness of their prosperity's dependence on natural resources. It is Mr. Ordway's deadly serious prayer that a new ethic may be developed and that leisure will be spent profitably to insure the continued productivity of the world for the generations to come.

In seventy years we may come to the end of our petroleum resources, our forests may be gone, and our land exhausted by overgrazing and overcropping. At that time, the most rigid controls and the most pious plans for the future may be too late. Mr. Ordway is neither a Malthusian prophet of doom nor a pie in the sky cornucopian. His message is sober and sensible, and his appeal must not go unheard.

GORDON CUYLER

THE FAILURES OF ECONOMICS: A Diagnostic Study. By Sidney Schoeffler. *Harvard.* *$4.75.*

There seems to be a greater awareness of late that economics has not and perhaps inherently cannot achieve that hoped for quality—status as a policy science. In this new study, Sidney Schoeffler diagnoses the cause of economics' current illness (failure to predict reliably and to control) as the inadequate, unimaginative and noncreative development of "concepts and analytic tools" suitable to and peculiarly designed to serve the function of economic analysis. And such must be done if economics is to attain even its proper status as an art concerned with problem-solving and no longer be merely a scientific pretender.

Being a diagnostic study rather than a prognostication or a prescription, Schoeffler first reviews, criticizes and evaluates some of the more generally accepted explanations of inability to create a scientific economics.

The author next takes up what he considers to be the real problem by examining in detail some ten important methodological weaknesses of economics, its concepts and tools. Each is revealed to be based on or to involve an artificiality which Schoeffler proceeds to name: artificial mechanization, artificial simplification, artificial generalization, et cetera. The discussion in this chapter, which is written largely in nontechnical language and which for the most part can be understood by the noneconomist, is later supplemented and supported by a challenging series of highly technical case studies, occupying almost one-third of the book.

Schoeffler holds out a healthy and bright future for economics (and presumably economists) if it once recognizes its failures and the source of failure and if it then earnestly endeavors to foster its own conceptual framework and analytic tools. It must no longer borrow and use those developed and employed by the true sciences. Economics *can become* the art *it is* and can become a respected and significant contributor to decision and policy making.

Schoeffler has issued his challenge cogently and with specifications. His book is provocative, and will surely provoke not a few of our so-called theoretical economists.

BURTON W. KANTER

DICTATORS FACE TO FACE. By Dino Alfieri. *New York.* *$4.95.*

Signor Alfieri was Italy's Ambassador to Germany from May of 1940 to the collapse of the Fascist regime in 1943. Although the author of the book under review was a faithful Fascist he was generally regarded as a harmless nonentity. The reasons for his appointment to this—from the Italian viewpoint—most important diplomatic post are, therefore, hard to understand unless one assumes that the principals had decided to carry the main burden of negotiation themselves. However, this assumption seems to be contradicted by the fact that Alfieri's counterpart—the German Ambassador in

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Rome (Mackensen)—was one of the best professional diplomats at the disposal of the German Foreign office at that time. All this leaves as the only possible explanation for the author's appointment his fairly close acquaintance with Ciano. Indeed, his testimony regarding Mussolini's son-in-law is the most reliable part of his book—but even here the author contributes only a confirmation of accounts already published.

From a book written by a man supposedly closely associated with the execution of the Italo-German Alliance the reader would have expected additional insights into the motives of major political decisions. Actually, the statements made by Signor Alfieri in Chapter III create the impression that he was either unaware of what the provisions of the Pact contained or that he had forgotten them. This probably explains Alfieri's disposing thus of Italy's reasons for entering the war: "This was the basic psychological motive which, in complete defiance of logic and all contrary opinions, prompted Mussolini to plunge headlong into his . . . adventure. He was absolutely convinced that 'in politics as in war, those who are absent are always wrong.'"

It is regrettable that this book offers so few sentences which at least throw some light on the personalities and particularly the judgment of the leaders of the Axis, for these vignettes are really the only contribution made by the author to our knowledge and understanding of Italo-German policy during the Second World War.

WILLIAM H. ROBERTS

SIX KEYS TO THE SOVIET SYSTEM. By Bertram D. Wolfe. *Beacon. $3.75.*

Published early in 1956, this collection of articles on Soviet totalitarianism written by Bertram D. Wolfe between 1940 and 1955 takes on added interest in the light of the Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist party. Would Mr. Wolfe assert with the same confidence that the dynamics of the totalitarian process make collective leadership transitory, now that the shattering of the Stalin cult has been predicated upon the theory of collective leadership? It would be wise to remember, as the author points out, that almost a decade was required for Stalin to dissolve the appearance of collective leadership in favor of personal power.

In what is perhaps the best section of this work Mr. Wolfe reminds us of the impact of the total state upon any aspirations of the human spirit toward independence. The very recital of example after example of intellectuals who either conformed or were eliminated adds a new dimension to our sometimes jaded comprehension of the workings of the total state.

Americans are optimists. Lest we be too prone to interpret the present admissions of past injustices in Soviet Russia as evidence of an emerging democracy, we would do well to read this study of totalitarianism and to bear in mind the rigid prohibition, midst the ferment in Russia today, against questioning the basic principles of Leninism and of the Communist party.

DAVID L. MARKS

THE ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE: Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955. By George McTurnan Kahin. *Cornell. $2.00.*

Diplomatic events of great importance usually find the layman prepared with enough historical perspective to understand and evaluate them for himself. When they have their genesis outside of the cultural history of the West he does not so readily grasp their significance and logic. George McTurnan Kahin's short and incisive account of the Bandung Conference is an invaluable interpretation of an event which was highly publicized in the West and widely misunderstood.

Professor Kahin's analysis is drawn from his extensive knowledge of the background of these meetings. He focuses attention on the motives of the sponsoring Colombo Powers—their immediate concern over tensions in the Formosa Straits, the desire to "enlighten the Chinese" and to encourage their diplomatic independence of Russia—and on the need of Asians and Africans to express their "personality and international dignity" to the world.

In terms of these objectives a great deal was achieved at Bandung. Chou En-lai was genuinely impressed with the environment

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of opinion created for him and was moved to make specific assurances of restraint and good faith.

The texts of important speeches selected for the appendix help to outline the figures of Chou, the conciliatory Asiatic titan, and a querulous and insistant Nehru, piqued at the incomplete success of his self-appointed role of mediator. Although these are important documents, one almost wishes that Professor Kahin had filled the scant pages entirely with his own valuable comments.

ROBERT A. CATTELL

FRONTIER POLITICS AND THE SECTIONAL CONFLICT. By Robert W. Johannsen. *Washington.* $5.00.

The central theme of Dr. Johannsen's excellent book relates to the manner in which the Free-Soil Democrats of Oregon coalesced with the Republican minority party in 1860. The people of Oregon were, in varying degrees, conservative, and the great majority were Democrats. The story unfolded in this work portrays the immobilization of the Oregon Democratic party because of the immediacy of the slavery issue and local conditions.

That the divisive forces in the nation at large should be reflected in this periphery of the American frontier—the Pacific Northwest—was natural. The territories of Oregon and Washington were settled by men from every section of the nation, and they inevitably retained many of the prejudices and political animosities of the states from which they came. But distance and the difficulties of travel and communication tended for a number of years to isolate the area in question from national political issues. There was also the necessity of concentrating on the more immediate problems of survival. In this milieu the settlers forgot to a degree their past political alliances, especially in the realm of local politics. Nevertheless, the problem of slavery extension to the territories could not be ignored in view of the preparation for the admission of Oregon into the Union in 1859.

A faction of the Democratic party, under the leadership of Joseph Lane, professed its belief to the last in the efficacy of the

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Dred Scott decision, but a large segment of the party adhered to the Douglas doctrine of popular sovereignty. It was the latter group which joined the Republican party in framing a platform proclaiming its support of the Douglas principle. The new party was not only anti-abolition but anti-Negro to the extent that it would even exclude free Negroes from the state.

CLARENCE E. CARTER

GEORGE WASHINGTON IN THE OHIO VALLEY. By Hugh Cleland. *Pittsburgh.* *$5.00.*

This is a collection of Washington's writings about his seven trips into the upper Ohio Valley between 1753 and 1794, rounded out by a few contemporary descriptions of the events in which he participated. Prefaced by editorial introductions to each journey, the accounts cover four expeditions during the French troubles in the 1750's, trips in 1770 and 1784 inspired by interest in western lands, and the campaign against the Whiskey Rebels in 1794. Maps, illustrations, brief notes, and a short index are included; the description of the first journey is a facsimile of *The Journal of Major George Washington* which was originally published in 1754.

One of a series on the history of western Pennsylvania published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, this book is not as distinguished in treatment or as general in appeal as some of its companion volumes. Inevitably diffuse and disconnected, with editorial comment aimed at the general reader, its chief justification must be as a convenient concentration for those with a strong interest in the upper Ohio Valley or George Washington. And since the works of Washington are otherwise available, this scattering description of events distributed over forty years is not likely to find an audience outside western Pennsylvania.

RICHARD C. HASKETT

MR. FRANKLIN: A Selection from His Personal Letters. Edited by Leonard W. Labaree and Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. *Yale.* *$3.75.*

The pleasure of reading other people's mail is proved anew by this attractive little book. A 250th birthday tribute, it serves equally as a herald of the formidable work of Franklin scholarship being prepared by these same editors in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin.* Indeed, the only criticism that might be made is that the book is too short; this fault will be remedied in full by its successors.

Mr. Labaree and Mr. Bell have gracefully abstained from "the scholarly apparatus of annotation, collation, and bibliography," in the interests of presenting "Franklin, the man, to his fellow citizens" of today. Although the historian will, of course, find it delightful, this is a selection for the general reader; the approach is informal, and unobtrusive help is extended to those not acquainted with the period (as when it is explained that "philosophy" was then the term for what we now call "science"). Simplicity, brevity and humor characterize the editing throughout.

The volume is a handsome piece of book production: type, paper, and fine color illustrations do justice to the subject, and the cover design has Franklin associations—a pleasing touch.

Here, then, is the familiar figure of America's Mr. Franklin, playful, sensible, humane, buoyant and curious, expressing himself on a considerable range of topics, growing "warm" over British injustice, prosy over immortality, wry over love. He is humanly imperfect—sensitive to criticism (despite protestations of indifference), subject to some prejudices of time and place, sometimes exasperating in his rather priggish prudence. But how funny he is on "how to recommend a stranger." How delicately and gravely he compliments General Washington. How lucidly he describes his observations of a whirlwind or a balloon ascension. He flirts, as we hoped he would, with a Frenchwoman. He chats solemnly with a child, plies sister, wife and daughter with loving advice, writes an affecting farewell to an old friend.

He wished he might be "recalled to life" to visit a future America; future America well might wish the same.

EDITH WARREN

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JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND THE UNION. By Samuel Flagg Bemis. *Knopf. $8.75.*

John Quincy Adams and the Union is in every respect a fitting sequel to Samuel Flagg Bemis' earlier study of Adams' role in the formulation of American foreign policy. Like its predecessor, this volume is distinguished by the clarity and precision of its prose, the balanced and objective analyses which it contains, and the scholarship of its author.

Taking up where he left off at the conclusion of *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, Bemis reviews in detail Adams' campaign and election in 1824, his administration as President, and his illustrious career in the House of Representatives. Although the author obviously admires his subject, he does not hesitate to point out Adams' shortcomings as a President, a politician and a person. Bemis also makes clear that on more than one occasion political ambition forced Adams to subordinate his renowned principles to expediency. On the other hand, Adams is given the praise he so richly deserves for his opposition in the House to the "Gag Rule." In recent years it has become the fashion among some historians to view the abolitionists merely as fanatics who helped to prepare the way for the Civil War. Bemis is not unaware of this approach, but he prefers to emphasize—and I think correctly so—that as a spokesman for abolitionists, with whom he did not always agree, Adams was a champion of liberty and the American Union.

Perhaps no book is ever definitive, but this and the preceding volume by Bemis come as close to deserving that adjective as any biography published in recent years.

HAROLD C. SYRETT

A CHANGE OF CLIMATE. By Jay Williams. *Random House. $3.50.*

When Jay Williams leaves his home in Connecticut, as apparently he does quite often, and goes meandering about the world, he takes with him more than his wife and children. He takes a hungry eye, an intelligence quickened by wit and imagination, and a memory for stories. In *A Change of Climate* he proves the uses of all three.

In Wales and England, in Majorca, and even in the more familiar south of France, one absorbs through Williams' eyes things that, though looked at many times, one never *saw* before—"pale, yellowish blocks from the days of the first counts, smooth, rectangular gray blocks from the period of St. Louis, and rougher blocks, with a kind of projecting boss on the face. . . ." One not only sees through his eyes, but through his senses one is transported back to the Middle Ages, and beyond to "when the Visogoths conquered Gaul and based themselves on Carcassonne." The book is no traveler's guide, although he makes you know, not in a way to make you feel you must know, the shabby men who haunt the Mediterranean Coast, the languid life of Palma, and the sound of Spanish to unfamiliar ears.

But the real charm of this book lies in the stories and anecdotes which Jay Williams tells. Some of them are hilarious and some sober, some fantasy and some fact, but all of them are revealing of time or place and the truth of human lives.

SAUNDERS REDDING

THE FIVE DOLLAR GOLD PIECE: The Development of a Point of View. By Orville Prescott. Illustrated. *Random House. $3.50.*

Mr. Prescott writes a book column in the New York *Times* four times a week. This book is not so much autobiography, though there are interesting chapters on his childhood and youth, as it is an explanation of how he happened to become a professional book critic and how he works.

It is perhaps worth noting that the author's early education was haphazard. He went to various prep schools, some—like one run by a retired Marine colonel in Colorado—of dubious value, and he had no little trouble accumulating the entrance requirements for Williams College. But his predilection for reading developed early, and he had read prodigiously, if unsystematically, by the time he entered college.

While there are many indications of his taste in books, Mr. Prescott has not written a critical evaluation of current literary

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trends. Rather, in discussing why he picks certain books for review and how he approaches them, he is describing his work. It is significant to observe that he never deliberately starts a novel or nonfiction book which he is fairly certain he will find bad. In other words, he does not use his valuable newspaper space merely to tear down writing of which he disapproves, although he has to discuss a certain number of books he considers to be without appreciable merit because of their news value, the prominence of their authors, or for some other cogent reason.

Mr. Prescott's observations are enlightening and often amusing.

CARTER BROOKE JONES

BLAKE AND YEATS: The Contrary Vision. By Hazard Adams. *Cornell. $5.50.*

Mr. Adams has written a lucid and orderly book about the symbolism of Blake and Yeats, a subject which, at least to the nonspecialist, often appears to have little natural affinity for either of these qualities. Others have written more stimulating books on the subject (Mr. Adams pays tribute to some of them), but this is the book one should read *first.* Indeed, it should appear on any intellectual roadmap designed to guide the inquiring reader from Paraphrasable Content, via Baudelaire and Mallarmé, to *The Waste Land.* It undoubtedly will turn up on graduate and undergraduate "reserve book" reading shelves across the land.

It would be invidious to suggest that Mr. Adams has actually written two books, one on Blake and one on Yeats, for he develops a valid single thesis which draws his material together. At the same time, the book's chief usefulness to the average literate reader is that it explains what each poet separately, in his more visionary and esoteric verse, is "saying." It serves as a bridge, in short, between the "abnormal" sense of reality of the poet and the "normal" sense of the reader.

It is not a book for specialists—at least, it will tell them little of importance that they do not already know. As would be expected of "an extensively enlarged and revised version" of a doctoral dissertation, it is a utilitarian and informative, not a "creative," work of criticism. But the wholeness and balance of its approach, the objectivity of its interpretation, and the solidity of its scholarship take it far beyond the average dissertation and give it a permanent place in the list of essential books on Blake, Yeats and symbolism in English poetry.

CALVIN D. LINTON

O LOVELY ENGLAND, and Other Poems. By Walter de la Mare. *Viking. $3.00.*

The lyrical poems of Walter de la Mare have given delight to generations of readers. With the publication of *The Winged Chariot* he received the critical acclaim which he had never seemed to need—a rare quality among modern poets. But *O Lovely England,* which has already had some acclaim, may have difficulty finding readers. Except for a handful of poems, among them "The Thrush," "The Bourne," "Fey," and "Deadalive," the thoughts are trite and the language is bland. Yet, we respect his love of his country, and the witness this poet bears to the dignity of common joys and sorrows.

If we cancel out the modest "in vain" of this stanza, it seems a fair estimate of Walter de la Mare's achievement:

And I who have heard that echo of no tone
As if from outer silence, and alone,
Strive on in vain to express what all hearts feel
Yet words can never say.

LOUIS SIMPSON

AND PASTURES NEW: A Collection of Poems. By Melville Cane. *Harcourt, Brace. $4.00.*

What emerges from these collected poems of Melville Cane is that acute sensibility of the poet which crystallizes so swiftly and surely, sometimes into laughter, sometimes not. And occasionally Mr. Cane combines his moods with skill, as in the poem written when Houdini died where, with exquisite tightrope balance, the poet speaks in the same breath of the "box-trick" and of the actual escape of spirit from the body: "Lithe is the spirit and nimble/To loose the cords of the body." A heightening, an excruciating quality, results from this juxtaposition

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of the two mediums, the light and the serious.

Mr. Cane is also capable of injecting a certain element of timelessness into many of his "timely" and topical pieces. This is true of the 1948 threnody for Martin Dies and, less ominous though still painful, "Come March Fifteenth," redolent of last-minute jitters:

> Why can't I tell if I'm married or single?
> Why must I ask of my nurse or attendant
> Whether I'm childless or own a dependent?

There is sheer-spun loveliness in Mr. Cane's nature lyrics, as "Presence of Snow":

> So rare, so mere,
> You cannot hear
> It brush against the stillness or impair
> With faintest stir
> The poised, suspended air.

And enough has never been said of the immediacy in his poems of a loved country locale, with nostalgia rising from the moment of perfection.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT. By Eugene O'Neill. *Yale*. $3.75.

This posthumous play was completed fifteen years ago but withheld from the public because of the frankness with which O'Neill treats his mother, his father and his brother, as well as himself. Undoubtedly interest in it is increased by the fact that it deals so undisguisedly with the author's analysis of his own unhappiness and the extent to which he believed the general unhappiness of the family responsible for it. But this is far from being a mere autobiographical curiosity and is likely to stand among O'Neill's five or six best works.

The play is long and it begins quietly. However, tension mounts as the four O'Neills, each of whom has reached a breaking point, come out into the open with what each has been thinking, and seek to lay the blame for their sufferings anywhere but on themselves. Many of the themes have appeared in O'Neill's previous plays, but the very fact that they are here treated in the terms of domestic drama, rather than in those of more heightened tragedy, produces a different, though hardly less powerful, effect. It is not surprising that the recent world *première* in Sweden, where the author has long been greatly admired, should have been a triumph.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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The Reader Replies .....

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

Spring Issue

In his article "The Place of Thought in American Life," Daniel J. Boorstin presents a comparison of American and European intellectual culture which is somewhat misleading, based as it is on "the American creed" rather than on a careful analysis of available data. It is singularly hard for Americans to realize that when it comes to equality of opportunity rather than of status, the political, social and cultural institutions of most European countries are fully as equalitarian as their American counterparts. A professor of history, and one who feels himself sufficiently competent in the field of intellectual history to write an article about it, ought to know that the intellectual culture of Europe was never a product of the upper classes, nor was it ever reserved exclusively for them. Europe certainly offers a higher prestige, and possibly more power, to her intellectuals than America does. But whatever status a person may hold as an intellectual is achieved exclusively on the basis of demonstrated intellectual ability and is not based on title or wealth.

It is true that higher education in Europe is a privilege. But this privilege is open to all who have the necessary intellectual ability to complete the program—and for less expense than a college education in America—which gives the European educational system as broad a base as that of the American system. Available statistics show that, while the intellectual group (in Europe as in America) is to some degree self-recruiting due to the influence of home environment, all social classes have made contributions. A quick glance at the social background of the members of any profession, including the most prominent men and women of science, philosophy or literature, should be convincing.

Through the means of a progressively selective system of education, many European countries have attained a degree of literacy and a level of education for the masses which compare favorably with the American situation. Yet, without breaking the continuity of the culture by isolating the scholar from the masses, they have maintained an intellectual elite whose broad recruitment from all walks of life is an insurance of high intellectual quality. When these intellectuals are *recognized* as an elite and occasionally even become leaders in politics, it is because they are articulators of ideas and values which have deep roots in the living thoughts of the people. These facts, when recognized, put Professor Boorstin's statements about the deep bifurcation of the European society into thinkers and nonthinkers in a peculiar light. His remark: "Philosophers [in Europe] classify themselves as disciples of dead centuries, and all intellectual life becomes a museum of past ideologies," is simply astounding and does not bear favorable witness to his knowledge of European culture and history.

On the other hand, the American situation is hardly quite as bad as Professor Boorstin describes it. There can be no doubt about the existence of a strong anti-intellectual trend in modern Western civiliza-

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tion, particularly in its American version. It is probably also true that a culture which offers only a moderate status to the intellectual, and where the educational system—from kindergarten to college—has been debased to a cult of the mediocre in order that its "highest thoughts should be accessible to most men" gives little encouragement to superior minds to seek an intellectual career. Nevertheless, there are in America intellectuals of as high scholarly qualifications and of as great creative ability as some of their European colleagues. There are institutions of higher learning which are comparable to the best European universities. And scores of European scholars have come to this country and found a place to fill. All this seems to indicate that even the American culture has a place for the intellectual. Moreover, I think there is evidence to show that the influence of these intellectuals upon the general American culture is greater than Professor Boorstin seems to believe.

PETER A. MUNCH
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota

* * *

I have just glanced through your Spring issue. It promises to be as meaty as your Winter issue, which to me was a rare feast.

REX ROWLAND
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

* * *

We are regular subscribers to your magazine. But never in all the years have we found one article that we felt we just must share with our most sensitized friends as we felt about "The Judgment of the Birds" by Loren Eiseley.

I wish the author of this article might have seen little groups in our home enjoying together this article. Regularly you have inspiration and fresh ideas, but just now the world seems to need the confident, unsentimental presentation of a faith in positive wisdom in the heart of all life. This article illuminates stressing dawn rather than decay.

LOUISE M. WELCH
ELIZABETH GRAHAM
Springfield, Illinois

Winter Issue

How to tell you in less than a thousand words my delight and that of my friends with the special Winter issue! I loaned my copy to so many people that it was finally lost, and I had to buy another in a bookshop so that I might have it to keep. We have all read it, discussed it, and agreed that this is, by far, the finest issue yet. I like best of all the article on the American psychosis by Reinhold Niebuhr and, of course, Joseph Wood Krutch's column, to which I look forward each time.

I am a recent graduate, still very young and lacking the maturity and wisdom that only years of living can bring. My opinions are those of eagerness but of inexperience in judging the world around me. However, I repeat that my reaction to this issue is enthusiastic, and I quite agree with the general analysis of our human condition.

MARY L. BRANSON
Jackson Heights, New York

* * *

The symposium in your Winter issue, containing the private thoughts of "a number of distinguished writers and thinkers on aspects of the present human situation," made interesting reading.

For sheer unintelligibility of theme, played in a gamut of keys, B. F. Skinner's "Freedom and the Control of Men" bored me most. Perhaps his psychological training has so conditioned his thinking and writing that simplicity of statement would be rank heresy. It would have been, in my opinion, an editorial kindness to have incised some of the clichés, the tired arguments pertaining to the sciences versus the humanities. To have deleted a few of the repetitious statements would not have been detrimental to the sense of the whole.

Dr. Niebuhr's learned thesis on the cause and cure of what he chooses to call the "American psychosis" would send the average intelligent native into peals of derisive laughter. We are as afraid of communism and its devil's brew today as we were during the McCarthy era. If Dr. Niebuhr wants to prescribe for our psychosis, he'll have to live a great deal closer to the patients. The

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average American, though a mere segment of humanity, is, nevertheless, compounded of the same fears and emotions to which the rest of the species is prey. We are still subject to fits of alternating pessimism and optimism and are grossly hysterical about it, too. Modesty and patience may be the way of the saint and the seer, but these are not characteristic virtues of American nationalism. Being a young nation, we are inclined to impulsive action. We may give tired Europeans nervous prostration, but they'll survive and continue to accept, however ungraciously, the fruits of our exuberance.

The two essays I most enjoyed were "The Flowering of Latter-Day Man" by Max Lerner and "The New Schoolboy's Shining Face" by George N. Shuster. What they had to say wasn't any less profound than what the others had to offer. But these men write in clear, concise, and intelligible English which makes for an easy readability that adorns rather than obscures thought. Both authors temper their treatment of the serious with a delicate sense of humor and a touch of satiric irony that loses nothing of its impact for this light touch. Neither Mr. Lerner nor Mr. Shuster, despite the present catastrophic world situation, have lost faith in man's ability to make his way amid the chaos. I suspect that the chosen professions of these writers have something to do with their more optimistic philosophy of life. Both are closer to the thinking of the zany product we call the "average man." They give him credit for a native intelligence that sees him through to survival.

The spectacle of some of our jittery intellectuals jumping out of their ivory towers into a sea of pessimism or, perchance, selling their souls and talents to a New World Master, whatever his name or aim, prompts the person of average intelligence to re-examine the price of "intellectualism" in terms of the end product. The reaction is not, as the liberal intelligentsia posit, "anti-intellectualism," but rather a re-evaluation in which common sense, used as a weight, equalizes the balance. It is up to the American intellectual to elevate the scale in his favor and so regain his place on the ladder of national life. This will not be attained by flirting with questionable ideologies, or in beseeching the cultured European to witness the boorishness and aridity of an industrial America, or in a snobbish disdain of conservative nationalism. "Physician, cure thyself," if you would prescribe for us.

MILDRED G. DONOVAN
Buffalo, New York

* * *

May I express my deep appreciation of the excellent Winter number of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR? I am especially delighted with the two poems, "December" by Dorothy Lee Richardson and "The Raft" by Donald J. Lloyd. It is a really novel experience these days when a reader with A.B. and A.M. degrees, with majors in English, and a record of forty-two years as a teacher of English can read and *understand* with pleasure a modern poem without the aid of voluminous notes to explain what the author was too lazy or too vain to communicate. Please give us more of the works of these poets.

BELLA S. TURK
Kew Gardens, New York

* * *

Through a program of liberal studies and campus activities, we in the liberal arts colleges assume that we can make desirable changes in young people. Many of us pay lip service to a democratic philosophy of human behavior, but our actions are startlingly similar to those described in B. F. Skinner's article, "Freedom and the Control of Men."

Skinner maintains and tries to demonstrate that it is possible to *produce* behavior in others by arranging the proper conditions. Thus, the very person who most inveighs against the philosophy of behaviorism may be the one most adept in using it for his own purposes. This may be as true of a college professor as of anyone else who deals with people, particularly young people.

In the colleges we are attempting to produce the kind of men and women who become worthy members of various professions, or who make successful leaders in business and industry, or who are useful and happy

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in home and community life. In the church-related colleges we add moral and ethical training approved by our respective denominations. Are not these conditions similar to those Skinner suggests? Would "Skinner College" differ, at least in purpose, from our present liberal arts colleges?

But something seems to be amiss in this resemblance. The colleges, we claim, teach students to think. Think what? What we want them to think, of course, from the English theme to the philosophy paper. Our "controls" come under the heading of education and persuasion. We find that our best method of persuasion is an individual one, so we emphasize "personal contacts" with students. We keep a low student-faculty ratio and insist on small classes. Skinner describes this process as "supplying information, presenting opportunities for action, appealing to enlightened understanding, and so on." Thus the teacher does not "control" behavior—he simply helps students to make up their minds!

We reinforce the proper learning by all sorts of immediate rewards in the form of grades, honors, prizes. When we cannot control by praise, we use audio-visual aids or field trips or "practical experience" to get into students what we believe should be there. It is the *idea* of control which we reject, not its practice. We even measure our success in the activities of our alumni.

Skinner's underlying hypothesis is "that a different physical or cultural environment will make a different and better man." Every college catalogue says or implies the same thing. Perhaps we should realize what we are doing before our students discover the counter-controls or before someone asks, who controls the controllers?

ELEANOR O. MILLER
Illinois College
Jacksonville, Illinois

* * *

All the articles in the special Winter issue were on a very high level. The critical articles were perceptive and challenging, and the poetry particularly fine. My favorite among the articles is Professor Niebuhr's "The Cause and Cure of the American Psychosis"; of the critical articles, I liked especially "The Possibilities of Heroism" by David Daiches; and of the poetry I think "December" by Dorothy Lee Richardson is an absolutely perfect lyric, a triumph of sustained imaginative expression.

I am glad to write enthusiastically about the Winter issue because I was disappointed in the Autumn one, though here too the poetry, especially "Obscure Incident" by David Morton, was very fine. But the forum on the American novel did not seem to me successful. The framework was too elaborate for what there was in the way of ideas.

MABEL FOOTE WEEKS
New York, New York

* * *

Professor B. F. Skinner, in "Freedom and the Control of Men," sought to persuade his readers to share his disturbed feelings concerning the reluctance of many scientists, the intelligentsia, and the general public to embrace the idea of controlling the behavior of the people of a community by having their reflexes conditioned by an elite group. The theory which seemed to warrant such a public policy, however, contains a neuro-physiological impossibility. The evidence that human behavior cannot be the result of conditioned reflexes, but on the contrary flows from combinations of sensing services, is precise. The eyes cannot, nor can any other sense organ, perform the sensing services the theory of conditioning requires. May I relate briefly how I came upon the well-hidden, but definite, evidence?

When I was studying psychology in my freshman year under Professor Max Meyer, I happened to read that a young man who was born with cataracts over his eyes had these obstructions to vision removed by surgery when he was about twenty years of age. He reported that when the bandages were removed he saw only a field, or panorama, composed of patches of color of varied shapes, but without significances. That is, he saw no objects. His eyes, together with the optic cables and the visual centers, having no means of themselves in tracing incoming patterns of rays back to their origins in specific objects, could not see separate objects and their qualities. Analysis revealed the eyes cannot even group light rays into

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patterns according to their emanations from particular objects, and so cannot see separate objects in the field of vision.

I became curious concerning what the patient actually saw, or what an infant at first sees. I would stop in front of a field of objects and then try to see only what the young man saw. I kept trying these experiments until I became somewhat proficient in seeing, not precisely what the patient saw, but a visual field approximating what he saw. Unbelievable as it may seem, it did not occur to me that perhaps I was the only person in the world making such experiments. Still much more incredible, I saw no particular significance in unamplified visual seeing. Let us say it was nature's way of shielding a freshman from trying to comprehend more than he could see. Other studies soon absorbed my attention.

About twenty years later, after studying alignments from an engineering point of view, I revived those experiments to learn the nature of the services the eyes actually provide in aligning action. Analysis of the experiments revealed that the eyes cannot provide sensing services adequate to align action. Yet, action must be aligned to enable a person to move toward a particular object or among a field of objects. Further, it became clearly evident that the eyes cannot even sense impacts, a form of sensing contribution basically necessary in guiding manipulative activities. The theory of conditioning shunted research away from the problem of how separate objects and their qualities are seen.

The theory of conditioning also left in obscurity where sense-organ sensing contributions cease and the supplementary contributions begin. This omission blocked an interest in developing a theory of the function of comprehending and how its services are provided. Comprehending is not a disservice. On the contrary, it can render necessary services in amplifying the inadequate contributions of the eyes or other sense organs. Those who accepted conditioning merely assumed that the theory of comprehending would not be as worth developing as would the theory of conditioning.

Human beings have available the services of a form of sensing that can enter the field of potentialities. As long as people become aware of the potentialities of their environment and of their potential capacities for action, they will never become permanently the robots of either tradition or the cult of conditioning. They will always endeavor to retain to some degree their freedom to explore the potentialities of their environment for being better understood and being more competently dealt with.

To sum up, the forms of behavior which Professor Skinner claims are the result of conditioning processes, experimental evidences indicate are produced by combinations of the several kinds of sensitivity services, such as the primary sensing services; the amplifying, or supplementary, comprehendings; and the potentiality awareness services.

Robert R. Kern
Washington, D. C.

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